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# Islam, Politics and Youth in Malaysia

The pop-Islamist reinvention of PAS

Dominik M. Müller



# Islam, Politics and Youth in Malaysia

Providing an ethnographic account of the Islamic Party of Malaysia (PAS) and its Youth Wing (Dewan Pemuda PAS), this book analyses the genesis and role of Islamic movements in terms of their engagement in mainstream politics. It explores the party's changing approach towards popular culture and critically investigates whether the narrative of a post-Islamist turn can be applied to the PAS Youth.

The book shows that in contrast to the assumption that Islamic marketization and post-Islamism are reinforcing each other, the PAS Youth has strategically appropriated and integrated Islamic consumerism to pursue a decidedly Islamist—or 'pop-Islamist'—political agenda. The media-savvy PAS Youth elites, which are at the forefront of implementing new outreach strategies for the party, categorically oppose tendencies of political moderation among the senior party. Instead, they are most passionately calling for the establishment of a Syariah-based Islamic order for state and society, although these renewed calls are increasingly expressed through modern channels such as Facebook, YouTube, rock music, celebrity advertising, branded commodities and other market-driven forms of social movement mobilization.

A timely and significant contribution to the literature on Islam and politics in Malaysia and beyond, this book sheds new light on widespread assumptions or even hopes of "post-Islamism". It is of interest to students and scholars of Political Religion and Southeast Asian Politics.

**Dominik M. Müller** is a postdoctoral fellow at Goethe-University Frankfurt, Germany, and was recently a visiting scholar at Stanford University, USA. His anthropological research focuses on Muslim politics and popular culture in Southeast Asia.

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First published 2014  
by Routledge  
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

and by Routledge  
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

*Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business*  
D.30

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*British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data*

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

*Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data*

Müller, Dominik.

Islam, politics and youth in Malaysia: the pop-Islamist reinvention of PAS / Dominik Müller.

pages cm. – (Routledge contemporary southeast asia series)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

1. Parti Islam Se-Malaysia. 2. Islam and politics – Malaysia. 3. Muslim youth – Malaysia. 4. Youth movements – Malaysia. I. Title.

JQ1062.A98P3746 2014

324.2595'082 – dc23

2013026362

ISBN: 978-0-415-84475-8 (hbk)

ISBN: 978-1-315-85053-5 (ebk)

Typeset in Times New Roman  
by Taylor & Francis Books

**This book is dedicated to the four most valuable persons in my life:**

**Keyvan, Erika, Katharina and Jürgen (†2009)**

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# Acknowledgments

First and foremost I wish to thank Susanne Schröter for supervising the Ph.D. thesis from which this book arose. Without her tireless support and guidance this project could scarcely have been accomplished. Furthermore, Farish A. Noor provided extraordinary assistance, arranging both my first contact with senior PAS leaders and providing invaluable practical advice throughout the course of my fieldwork and writing process.

Additionally, I remain deeply grateful for various forms of help that I received throughout the duration of this project from many sides, including Joseph C. Liow, Marin Trenk, Karl-Heinz Kohl, Holger Warnk, Oliver Bertrand, Janine Murphy, Haris Zalkapli, Noorita Wakiman, Mardian Shah Omar, Sophie Lemièr, Katja Rieck, Ute Rösenthaller, Mee Fen Siong, Lusi Wulan, Bart Barendregt, and Georgios Tserdakidis.

My colleagues at the 'Contemporary discourses on state and society in the Islamic world' research group at the Cluster of Excellence 'Normative Orders' at Goethe-University Frankfurt inspired me throughout the completion of this research project and added substantial value to this monograph. Accordingly, I want to thank Gunnar Stange, Roman Patock, Kristina Grossmann, Antonius Ario Seto Hardjana, Amporn Marddent, Sonia Zayed, Pak Suratno, Natalie Sharifzadeh, Matthias Heilmann, Somayeh Karimi, Alireza Hassanzadeh, Alewtina Schuckmann, Birte Brecht, and Sylvia Bakarbesy. The Cluster of Excellence also generously funded my research project from its beginning in 2008 until the finalization of this book.

Much of this book is grounded in empirical data, which I was able to gather due to the openness and friendly assistance of PAS members who were willing to share their time with me, arrange contacts, allow me to participate in their party's activities, or serve as my interlocutors. First, I want to thank the PAS Deputy President YB Mohamad 'Mat' Sabu, who not only helped me a lot during my fieldwork in Malaysia, but with whom I furthermore had a memorable travel experience in my home country, Germany. In addition, I am grateful to YB Salahuddin Ayub, YB Dato' Mustafa Ali, YB Dr Hatta Ramli, YB Ustaz Nasharudin Mat Isa, YB *Tuan Guru* Dato' Seri Abdul Hadi Awang, YB *Tok Guru* Dato' Bentara Setia Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat, Ustaz Wan Azhar Wan Ahmad, and Ustaz Nik Muhammad Zawawi Nik



Salleh from the senior PAS leadership for their cooperation. From the PAS Youth, I wish to express my gratitude to Ustaz YB Nasrudin bin Hassan at-Tantawi, Dr Raja Ahmad Iskandar, Khairul Faizi Ahmad Kamil, Ahmad Sabki Yusof, Kamaruzaman Mohamad, Ustaz Mohd Khairil Anuar bin Mohd Wafa, Ustaz Azman Shapawi Abdul Rani, Ustaz Mohd Nuri, Mohamad Sany Hamzan, Mohd Fadhli Ghani, Juhari Osman, Muhammad Hafiz Musa, Ustaz Mohd Nor bin Hamzah, Wan Faizul Abbas, YB Ustaz Nasir Zakaria, Ustaz Kamarudin Sidek, Afiq, Akmal, and Aizuddin, and all other PAS Youth activists who graciously spent time with me during my field research. Despite having been a non-Muslim *orang putih*, I always felt welcome at the PAS Youth headquarters at Jalan Raja Laut, Kuala Lumpur, and highly appreciate this remarkable openness and hospitality. I owe particular gratitude to the PAS community of Kawasan Besut, Terengganu, including my friend Azizie Ibrahim and his family, Syam, Nik Hassan Azmi, Haji Hassan Salleh, Ustaz Mohamad Zulkifli Kadir, Ustaz Adam Mat Said, and Mohamad Nasir Awang. From the PAS Women's Wing, I would like to thank Dr Rosni Adam, Nurul\*, Amirah\*, and Maryam\* for their kind support. Furthermore, I must mention the insightful explanations I was provided by the Youth Wing leaders of DAP and PKR, Anthony Loke Siew Fook and YB Shamsul Iskandar, as well as the Youth leader of the PAS Non-Muslim Supporters' Wing, Balendran Balasubramaniam.

This book was completed during a visiting scholarship at the Walter H. Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center (APARC) at Stanford University in 2013. Therefore, I would like to express my utmost gratitude to APARC and particularly Donald K. Emmerson, Gi-Wook Shin, Lisa Lee, and Victoria Kwong. Don Emmerson's ingenious thoughts and practical suggestions, as well as APARC's provision of excellent conditions for writing and research, were extremely helpful in the final period of this project. My stay at Stanford was generously supported by a fellowship within the Post-doc Programme of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD).

I wish to thank the editor of the journal *Paideuma* for permission to use revised material from my article 'Post-Islamism or Pop-Islamism? Ethnographic Observations of Muslim Youth Politics in Malaysia' which has been published in vol. 59 (2013), pp. 261–84. I also wish to thank the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) and IP Publishing Ltd. for their friendly permission to reproduce a section from my article 'An Internationalist National Islamic Struggle? Narratives of "Brothers Abroad" in the Discursive Practices of the Islamic Party of Malaysia (PAS)', which appeared in *South East Asia Research*, vol. 18, no. 4 (Special Issue: Islamic Civil Society in Southeast Asia: Localization and Transnationalism in the Ummah, edited by Joseph C. Liow), pp. 757–91.

On a sad note, my sincere thanks go to my former lecturer Sven Kosel (†2012), whose support for my ERASMUS-studies at Leiden University (2006–7) and our regular discussions at the Department of Southeast Asian Studies at Goethe-University Frankfurt were crucial sources for my motivation

to pursue this dissertation project in the first place. When he passed away, an outstanding young scholar of the anthropology of Southeast Asia left us much too early. I will never forget the foundational inspiration that he gave me.

Finally, I want to thank all those who for various reasons have not been explicitly named but also have contributed to my work throughout both the fieldwork and writing processes.

Frankfurt, June 2013

This publication is part of the DFG-funded Cluster of Excellence “The Formation of Normative Orders” at Goethe University Frankfurt am Main.



Exzellenzcluster an der Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main

## A note on names, pseudonyms and spelling

Most names in this book are proper names, particularly those of leading PAS and PAS Youth officials. In cases where interlocutors insisted on maintaining their anonymity, or where my reference to their statements might cause problems to them, I have used pseudonyms and changed contextual information in order to protect their identity. All pseudonyms are marked with ‘\*’.

I have used local spellings in *Bahasa Malaysia*. All translations of Malay textual sources and interviews are my own, with the exception of translations that have been published elsewhere before, such as quotations from English-speaking Malaysian news media.

# Abbreviations

ABIM	Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (Malaysian Islamic Youth Movement)
AJK	Ahli Jawatankuasa Kerja (Executive Central Committee Member)
AKP	Akademi Kepimpinan Muda Pemuda PAS (PAS Youth Academy for Young Leaders), Malaysia
AKP	Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (Justice and Development Party), Turkey
AMK	Angkatan Muda Keadilan (Youth Wing of PKR)
AUKU	Akta Universiti dan Kolej Universiti 1971 (University and University Colleges Act, UUCA)
BN	Barisan Nasional (National Front), Malaysian government coalition
DAP	Democratic Action Party
DAPSY	Democratic Action Party Socialist Youth (Youth Wing of DAP)
DEB	Dasar Ekonomi Baru (New Economic Policy, NEP)
DEMA	Gerakan Demokratik Belia Dan Pelajar Malaysia (Malaysia Youth and Students Democratic Movement)
DHPP	Dewan Himpunan Penyokong PAS (PAS Non-Muslim Supporters' Wing)
DPMT	Dewan Perwakilan Mahasiswa Tanta (Representative Council of Malaysian Students in Tanta, Egypt)
DPP	Dewan Pemuda PAS (PAS Youth Wing)
DPPP	Dewan Pemuda PAS Pusat (PAS Youth Wing, national level)
EXCO	Executive Central Committee Member (Ahli Jawatankuasa Kerja, AJK)
GAMIS	Gabungan Mahasiswa Islam Se-Malaysia (Islamic Student Association of Malaysia)
GERAK	Majlis Gerakan Keadilan Rakyat Malaysia (Malaysian People's Justice Movement)
GTP	Government Transformation Programme
HAMAS	Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islami(y)ya (Islamic Resistance Movement, Palestine)

HINDRAF	Hindu Rights Action Force
HIZBI	Al-Hizbul Islami (Malaysian student group in the United Kingdom & Ireland)
HTM	Hizbut Tahrir Malaysia ('Party of Liberation', transnational Islamist group)
IPS	PAS Youth Institute for Policy Studies (Institut Kajian Polisi)
ISA	Internal Security Act (Akta Keselamatan Dalam Negeri)
ISIUKM	Ikatan Studi Islam Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (Islamic Studies Association of the National University of Malaysia)
JAIS	Jabatan Agama Islam Selangor (Selangor Islamic Department)
JAKIM	Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia (Islamic Development Department of Malaysia)
JIM	Jamaah Islah Malaysia
KAMI	Kumpulan Aktivis Mahasiswa Independen (Independent Student Activists Group)
KARISMA	Kelab Rakan Siswa Islah Malaysia (JIM-related student organization)
KMM	Kesatuan Melayu Muda (Young Malays Union)
KOPASTI	Koperasi Pendidikan & Kebajikan Anak Soleh Tunas Islam (commercial company under the PAS Youth's group PASTI)
KPMP	Kelab Penyokong Muda PAS (PAS Non-Muslim Young Supporters' Club)
KPP	Kelab Penyokong PAS (PAS Non-Muslim Supporters' Club)
KPT	Keluarga Penuntut-Penuntut Terengganu Mesir (Malaysian student organization in Egypt)
MATA	Majlis Agama Tertinggi Sa-Malaya (Pan-Malayan Supreme Religious Council)
MCP	Malayan Communist Party
MNLA	Militant Wing of the Malayan Communist Party (MCP)
MNP	Malay Nationalist Party (Parti Kebangsaan Melayu Malaya, PKMM)
NDP	National Development Policy
NEM	New Economic Model
NEP	New Economic Policy (Dasar Ekonomi Baru, DEB)
NVP	National Vision Policy
MAGERAN	Majlis Gerakan Negara (National Operations Council)
MCA	Malaysian Chinese Association
MIC	Malaysian Indian Congress
PAS	Parti Islam SeMalaysia/Parti Islam SeMalaya, also spelled Parti Islam Se-Malaysia/Parti Islam Se-Malaya (Islamic Party of Malaysia)
PERKASA	Pertubuhan Pribumi Perkasa Malaysia (a right-wing ethno-nationalist Malay organization)
PKMM	Parti Kebangsaan Melayu Malaya (Malay Nationalist Party of Malaya, MNP)

PKPIM	Persatuan Kebangsaan Pelajar Islam Malaysia (National Union of Malaysian Muslim Students)
PKR	Parti Keadilan Rakyat (People's Justice Party)
PKS	Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (Prosperous Justice Party, Indonesia)
PMI	Persatuan Mahasiswa Islam (Islamic Students Association)
PMIP	Pan-Malayan Islamic Party (Persatuan Islam Sa-Malaya), a previous name of PAS
PMIUKM	Persatuan Mahasiswa Islam Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (Islamic Students Union of UKM)
PMIUM	Persatuan Mahasiswa Islam Universiti Malaya (Islamic Students Union of UM)
PMRAM	Persekutuan Melayu Republik Arab Mesir (Malay Association in the Arab Republic of Egypt)
PR	Pakatan Rakyat (People's Alliance), Malaysia's opposition coalition
PRM	Parti Rakyat Malaysia (People's Party of Malaysia)
PUM	Persatuan Ulama Malaysia (Malaysian Ulama Association)
PRC	PAS Representative Council of UK & Ireland (Perwakilan PAS UK & Ireland)
SMM	Solidariti Mahasiswa Malaysia (Solidarity of Malaysian Students)
UKM	Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (National University of Malaysia)
UM	University of Malaya
UMNO	United Malays National Organisation (Pertubuhan Kebangsaan Melayu Bersatu)
UUCA	University and University Colleges Act 1971 (Akta Universiti dan Kolej Universiti, AUKU)

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# Introduction

During the last decade, the vague entity 'Islamism' has received extensive academic and media attention across the globe, particularly in the Western world. While the initial focus on 'radical Islamism' was triggered by the terrorist attacks in New York, Bali, London, and Madrid, the killing of Theo van Gogh and violent protests in the aftermath of the 'Muhammad caricatures', more recently, the discourse has shifted direction. In the course of the popular uprisings in the Arab world, which became known as the Arab Spring, dominant debates became more concerned with the supposedly 'post-Islamist' transformation of 'increasingly moderate' Islamic movements that enjoy substantial popular support, such as the Renaissance Party (Ennahda) of Tunisia and the Muslim Brotherhood (Ikhwanul Muslimin) in Egypt. In fact, Islamic movements are ideologically, politically, and also culturally much more complex and dynamic than they tend to be depicted particularly by Western observers. At the same time, the claim of a post-Islamist evolution, which has become a dogma among several scholars of contemporary Muslim politics, remains an empirically open question.

The term 'Islamism' is highly contested, and reasonable arguments have been made for and against its use (for an excellent overview of the debate, see Barzegar and Martin 2010). Broadly defined, 'Islamism' can be understood as an anti-secular religio-political ideology and interrelated holistic lifestyle orientation which insists that any aspect of individual and collective human life must strictly follow God's supposed will in terms of how life on earth should be organized, as prescribed in Islamic Law (*syariat Islam*). A crucial feature of Islamist ideologies is the ideal target to create an 'Islamic State' and society, 'completely' structured under divine law, as opposed to 'man-made' laws. As such, Islamism is by no means intrinsically linked to militancy, violence or revolutionary aspirations, despite the tendency of public debates to popularize such essentialist stereotypes. While an increasing number of scholars emphasize that Islamist ideologies and their cultural realizations are not monolithic, anthropology as a discipline that studies human diversity on the ground, in close interaction with its research subjects, is in an ideal position to examine the particular manifestations of Islamic politics in different communities, movements and organizations.



## 2 Introduction

In political movements, including those of an Islamic brand, the youth tends to be the most progressive, idealistic and daring group, likely to generate political and cultural changes. During the highly receptive formative years of youth and early adolescence, lasting value orientations are often built, and, depending on the historical circumstances and the actors themselves, new political generations can arise. Given that such new generations and their normative contestations with the established elites shape the future of any given society or organization, either toward relative continuation or transformation, it is important to observe their discursive developments and worldviews. More specifically, as several academics argue that a transnational 'post-Islamist' or 'cultural turn' (Ammann 2002: 77) away from the state-political orientation of Islamism is taking place especially among the educated and media-savvy young generation, the youth of a long-established Islamist group might serve as an agency of change toward this direction. The respective scholarly arguments could subsequently be verified, falsified, or modified for the context of the examined empirical case.

In the Asia-Pacific region, Malaysia is a particularly interesting country for the study of contemporary Islamist tendencies and organizations in the middle of society. Despite Islam's constitutional status as the state's official religion, the leading Muslim government party UMNO (United Malays National Organisation) and the biggest Islamic opposition party PAS (Parti Islam Se-Malaysia) have prominently expressed that their country is either *already* (= UMNO) or *ought to be* (= PAS) an Islamic State (*Negara Islam/ Daulah Islamiyah*).<sup>1</sup> Since the 1980s, both parties are leading a fierce contestation of 'authentic' Islamic orthodoxy and political power, which is embedded into a discursive atmosphere in which a wide range of Islamic and Muslim Malay ethno-nationalist civil society actors and their anti-pluralist positions dominate public debates. On the other hand, religious and ethnic 'minorities' – circa 40 per cent of the population – are traditionally marginalized. This *status quo*, however, stands in contrast to Malaysia's well-communicated and highly romanticized international image as a role model state for a progressive, pluralist and tolerant Islam, where members of a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society live harmoniously together based on equal rights and mutual respect.

As the oldest mainstream Islamist party in Malaysia with close personal and ideological ties with the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood and many of its allies, PAS has experienced a dynamic history since its foundation in 1951. Today, 60 years after PAS was formed based on a decidedly Islamic political agenda, and 30 years after a new political generation of PAS Young Turks encouraged the transnational waves of Islamic resurgence to take firm localized roots in Malaysia, Islamism has become an integral part of mainstream politics in Malaysia's parliamentary democracy. As Joseph C. Liow points out, not only does PAS uphold the banner of Islamism, UMNO also has maneuvered its political course toward an Islamist agenda and thereby turned the state into a 'vehicle for' top-down 'Islamization' (Liow 2009: 181). This

governmental policy of legally officializing an orthodox brand of Sunni Islam was initiated by Prime Minister Mahathir bin Mohamad's (tenure 1981–2003) administration in the 1980s and has expanded ever since. This occurred via a gradual shift to a religious political rhetoric, and was also institutionalized through a wide corpus of Islamic laws, a partial turn to 'Islamic' economic and foreign policies, and the formation of an increasingly powerful state-based Islamic bureaucracy apparatus which partly operates beyond democratic control. Outside Kuala Lumpur and the tourist hot-spots with their colorful nightlife, moral policing against Muslim citizens, arrests for 'immoral activities' and the prosecution of 'deviant teachings' (*ajaran sesat*) have become an everyday normality.

Although local Muslim politicians no longer defend the idea of a secular state in public anymore, the question of what it precisely means to have Islam as the superior religion of a non-secular state remains contested. While UMNO has played a very active role in the political and legal Islamization process since the early 1980s, the biggest and de facto only Islamist opposition party PAS has always criticized the governmental Islamization efforts as not far-reaching enough, hypocritical (*munaifiq*) or 'only cosmetic'. In turn, PAS has, on a normative discourse level, consistently demanded a 'complete' implementation of the 'Syariah and its laws', particularly since the peak of the transnational 'first wave' (Göle 2002: 174) of Islamism in the early 1980s. Despite some interpretative polysemy and disagreement in terms of certain details, there is a wide consensus within PAS that it is a religious duty for Muslims to implement a 'God-made' legal order, and many of its legal norms are clearly defined and consensually agreed upon in ideal-theory. On the other hand, strategies and priorities remain disputed, and during the party's more than 60-year history, many internal political and organizational cultural changes have occurred. One key group that was often at the forefront of pioneering the innovations, transgressions and readjustments which led to such changes was the PAS Youth.

In the increasingly large corpus of literature on Muslim politics in Malaysia, surprisingly little attention has been paid to the PAS Youth. Furthermore, the many changes in the Islamic Party's cultural life—and its political dimensions—have rarely been taken into consideration. The present book addresses this research gap from an anthropological perspective, based on empirical data obtained during ten months of multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork among the PAS Youth community between February 2009 and June 2010, supplemented by a regular observation of PAS' digital media channels until June 2013. Although the contested inner life of a particular Islamic movement will be explored in the context of Malaysia, the analysis will also engage wider debates that are relevant for the comparative study of contemporary Muslim politics—including the hypothesis of post-Islamism, the 'second wave' of Islamism, and my own antithetical observation of a pop-cultural reinvention of decidedly Islamist political activism.

## **Organization of the monograph**

The book is structured in four chapters. The first, entitled ‘Conceptual framework: Islamism, post-Islamism or pop-Islamism?’ introduces the central research questions and provides their theoretical basis, particularly with regards to the idea of a transnational post-Islamist evolution in the Muslim world. In order to broadly contextualize the subject of research, the second chapter, ‘The politics of Islam in Malaysia’, provides historical background information and explains the relationship of ethnicity, Islam and politics in post-colonial Malaysia. The third chapter, ‘The Islamic Party of Malaysia (PAS) and its Youth Wing’, focuses on the Islamist opposition in more detail. It describes organizational structures, before analyzing the impact of generational contestations in the history of PAS, more recent processes of internal factionalism, and the role of religio-political mobilization of the campus in Malaysia and among Malaysian students abroad. The fourth chapter, ‘The pop-Islamist reinvention of PAS: Anthropological observations’, is the ethnographic centerpiece of this book, presenting various results from the author’s fieldwork supplemented by an analysis of PAS-internal media sources. It comprises two broad streams: First, it describes the PAS Youth’s attempts to approach the youth via a modernization of its political campaigning and missionary work (*dakwah*), as observed by the author during participant observation; and second, it discusses the Islamic Party’s negotiation between anti-Western ideology and the rise of modern Islamic marketization. These findings directly address the central research questions, as formulated in Chapter 1, and subsequently lead to the final conclusion.

## **Notes**

- 1 Although UMNO also has an official Malay-language name, *Pertubuhan Kebangsaan Melayu Bersatu*, in local public discourse it is generally referred to in the English version.

# 1 Conceptual framework

## Islamism, post-Islamism or pop-Islamism?

The Islamic Party of Malaysia, PAS, is a particularly insightful example for the complexity, cultural creativity and dynamicness of contemporary Islamic movements. It has long been perceived by outside observers as a group of 'Islamist radicals' who want to ban traditional dances, concerts, and everything 'Western'. In recent years, however, the party underwent a far-reaching pop-cultural transformation. In addition to opening the party for a new genre of 'Islamic entertainment', PAS Youth activists have started experimenting with modern marketing approaches in order to advertise the party's 'Islamic struggle'. With their increasingly professionalized usage of social media, branding strategies, 'pious' rock music, and the language of entrepreneurialism, they try to link their party to contemporary trends in popular culture for the purpose of social movement mobilization. Although many PAS members stress that these changes were only technical and did not touch upon the contents of the Islamist message, the party has reinvented itself during this ongoing 'popization' process.<sup>1</sup> In contrast to the scholarly logic of a 'post-Islamist turn', my research findings suggest that the PAS Youth has chosen a pop-Islamist path instead. But before this argument will be contextualized and empirically substantiated, some constitutive ideas behind the narrative of post-Islamism shall be reviewed.

### The evolutionary logic of post-Islamism

Parallel to questions regarding the compatibility of Islamist ideals such as God's sovereignty and legislative power with democratically rooted popular sovereignty, observers of Muslim politics also widely discuss the idea of a transnational post-Islamist turn. One of its most prominent proponents, Asef Bayat (2007: 10–11), has famously argued that:

The appeal, energy, and sources of legitimacy of Islamism are exhausted, even among its once ardent supporters. Continuous trial and error makes the system susceptible to questions and criticism. Eventually, pragmatic attempts to maintain the system reinforce abandoning its underlying principles. Islamism becomes compelled, both by its own internal contradictions

## 6 *Conceptual framework*

and by societal pressure, to reinvent itself, but it does so at the cost of a qualitative shift ... (toward a project that emphasizes) rights instead of duties, plurality in place of a singular authoritative voice, historicity rather than fixed scripture.

For Bayat, the argument of 'post-Islamism' was initially a largely empirical claim to describe 'the realities of the Islamic Republic (of Iran)' (Bayat 2005: 7; cf. Bayat 1996; Kian 1997). Followed by many others, he later revised this position and transformed 'post-Islamism' into an 'analytical category' (Bayat 2005: 5) with a much wider claim of validity, arguing that it refers to the 'metamorphosis of Islamism (in ideas, approaches and practices) from within and without' (ibid.).

While the goal to create an Islamic State as a means to establish an Islamic society that lives in accordance with an all-encompassing divine legal order is a defining element of Islamism (Amin 2010: 242; Liow 2009: 6–7; Tibi 2007: 6), the abandoning of this goal and underlying ideology is a key characteristic of post-Islamism (Amin 2010: 242; Boubekour and Roy 2012; Roy 2004; Schiffauer 2010). Nevertheless, a post-Islamist society or movement is not conceptualized as anti-Islamic or non-religious, but represents a 'secularisation of state and prevalence of religious ethic in society' (Bayat 2007: 5). Bayat (ibid.: 189) distinguishes 'contrastive trajectories' of post-Islamism in different countries, such as Iran and Egypt, but generalizes that, also beyond these cases, a 'gradual change in the nature of Islamism' has taken place as it has moved 'from a political project challenging the state to one concerned with personal piety' (ibid.: 146). In his view, this development was reinforced by post-Islamist tendencies within several Islamic movements, such as the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, the Lebanese Hezbollah, and the Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AKP) in Turkey (Bayat 2005: 7; cf. Bayat 2007: 13, 189). Even in Saudi Arabia, Bayat observes signs of the transnational 'post-Islamist trend' that has 'begun to accommodate aspects of democratization, pluralism, women's rights, youth concerns and social development with adherence to religion' (Bayat 2007: 13, 188–89).

Olivier Roy, besides Gilles Kepel arguably the most distinguished French scholar of Muslim politics, has extensively published on the 'collapse of Islamism as a political ideology' (Roy 2013: 16), which, in his understanding, is caused by disillusionment, the lack of a convincing 'blueprint for ruling' (ibid.: 14), and also by the secularizing constraints of politics (Roy 2012: 8, see also Roy 1992; Kepel 2000). According to Roy, the Islamic State utopia and holistic ideologies have 'lost credibility' especially among the educated youth. In his view, modernization and the rise of new media have undermined the young generation's receptiveness for the Islamist 'top-down, authoritarian' structure 'of knowledge transmission' (Roy 2013: 14), even among the youth in Islamist organizations such as the Muslim Brotherhood. The German anthropologist Werner Schiffauer (2010: 359, author's translation) similarly argues that post-Islamism has taken root 'in wide parts of the Muslim world',

resulting from a general ‘disillusionment’ with the state-political orientation of Islamism since the 1990s. He relates this argument to his empirical observation of young ‘organic intellectuals’ within the second generation of the *Milli Görüş* movement in Germany, pious activists in a diasporic situation who have access to and are forced to interact with other worldviews, who mediate between in-group and out-group, and pursue a much more flexible agenda than ‘classical Islamists’ of the past (ibid.: 24, author’s translations). Schiffauer (ibid.: 377) suggests that post-Islamism is less dogmatic in terms of the Islamist amalgamation of religion and politics, but very systematic when it comes to the Islamic way of life at an individual level.

Husnul Amin, who applied the concept of post-Islamism to Muslim politics in Pakistan, rejects any ‘crude generalisation’ (Amin 2010: 18) and suggests a structure of multiple pathways within one transnationally observable phenomenon, with specific trajectories varying ‘across time and geographical location’ (ibid.: 17). Accordingly, Pakistan represents only ‘a small subset of the broader post-Islamist project in other Muslim societies like Iran, Sudan and Turkey’ (ibid.: 18). Ihsan Yilmaz (2008, no page), on the other hand, recognized ‘multiple post-Islamisms’.

However, there are also authors (Fradkin 2013; Sinanovic 2005) who are more skeptical about the universalist claim and evolutionary logic of post-Islamism. Schwedler (2011: 371) reminds us that an unreflected bias in favor of post-Islamist ‘moderation’ may have a respective impact on our research focus and evaluation of data:

Many studies are biased toward more liberal individuals within these groups—those to whom foreign researchers have the greatest access—leaving open questions of whether the individuals examined are in any way representative ... We *want* Islamists to become more moderate, and so we prioritize causal arguments about which mechanisms produce ... ideological moderation.

Finally, and most crucially for the ethnographic scope of this book, post-Islamism is often described as modern, marketized, media-savvy and consumption-oriented. The post-Islamist turn is therefore, according to Boubekeur and Roy (2012: 13), embodied by ‘a younger post-Islamist generation which has used Facebook and social networking, not to talk about the Islamic State, but to join global discourses on freedom and pluralist societies’. In the present book, however, we will see that in fact, the PAS Youth in Malaysia, a popular mass-organization, is dominated by young media-savvy activists with significant grassroots support who are still, or rather *again*, calling for an Islamic State. They passionately, albeit paradoxically, distribute their urgent emphasis on decidedly Islamist positions via Facebook, YouTube, and consumerist Islam, and uncompromisingly defend a top-down structure of knowledge-transmission, the ‘leadership of religious scholars’ (*kepimpinan ulama*), within their party.

**The second wave of Islamism**

The sociologist Nilüfer Göle (2002: 67) notes in the context of a rising public visibility of Islam in Turkey, that the ““original” European code of modernity ... is continuously and creatively appropriated and altered’ by public Islamic actors, a transnationally observable phenomenon that she perceives as both a critique and transformative fetishization of Western modernity. Departing from the ‘multiple modernities’ approach of Eisenstadt and Schluchter (1998), which pursues the project of a de-Westernization of the understanding of modernity, Göle (2002: 176) argues that manifestations of ‘Islamic modernity’ should be analyzed ‘not only in terms of their approximation to the West but also in their own terms’. As such non-occidental forms of modernity provide space for being ‘both modern and Muslim’ (Göle 2010: 113), they challenge the hegemonial claim of Western-style secular notions of modernity and re-define it to suit their own context (see also Göle 1993). The very nature of multiple modernities rests on the fact that when modernity is indigenized for different contexts, it acquires partially different meanings (Göle 2002: 184). Göle (ibid.: 184, 187) interprets such differences (or ‘extra’) and ‘the search for difference’ as inherent components of Islamic modernity, the expression of ‘a critical resistance to the assimilative strategies and homogenizing practices of modernity’.

Given that much of Göle’s (2002) argumentation about Islamic modernity as a reaction to and critique of an established order of overemphasized, fetishized secular modernity is tailored to the case of Turkey, its applicability for Malaysia is limited. This becomes obvious given the fact that, as Farish Noor (quoted in Liow 2009: 177) illustrates, in contrast to the Turkish context, ‘the idea of a secular state is dead in Malaysia’, and, as such, there is hardly a secular public order left for Islamic modernity to subversively appropriate and alter. Nevertheless, Göle’s analysis does apply to Malaysia when it comes to the amalgamation of Islamic modernity and the ‘second period’ of Islamism. The ‘first wave’ of Islamism is said to have reached its peak with the Islamic Revolution in Iran, 1979. This period was ‘characterized by mass mobilizations, Islamic militancy, a quest for an Islamic collective identity, and the implementation of a political and religious rule’ (Göle 2002: 174). The Islamism of that time was, aside from some militant tendencies in terms of strategy, ideologically shaped by the ‘systematic attempt from above to Islamicize society and the economy’ (Bayat 1996: 55), as well as the state’s legal system. The second wave, in contrast, witnessed a shift away from state-politically oriented ‘classical Islamism’ to a more individualized, culturally oriented, marketized and modern form of Islamist piety from the late 1980s or early 1990s. Göle (2002: 174) argues that during this second phase ‘a multiplicity of voices’ replaces ‘the ideological chorus’, where:

Actors of Islam blend into modern urban spaces, use global communication networks, engage in public debates, follow consumption patterns,

learn market rules, enter into secular time, get acquainted with values of individuation, professionalism, and consumerism, and reflect upon their new practices. Hence we observe a transformation of these movements from a radical political stance to a more social and cultural orientation, accompanied by a loss of mass mobilization capacity, which led some researchers to pronounce the end of Islamism and the ‘failure of political Islam’.<sup>2</sup>

However, Göle rejects the hegemonial assumption that the political nature of Islamism is declining. Accordingly,

A more cultural orientation does not mean a less political one. Indeed, instead of disappearing as a reference, Islam penetrates even more into the social fiber and imaginary, thereby raising new political questions, questions not addressed solely to Muslims but concerning the foundational principles of collective life in general.

(Ibid.)

Despite this argument primarily referring to political dimensions beyond state, governmental or party politics, it is clear that these dimensions—politics and culture—are interlinked in the democratically constitutive discursive space of public spheres.

The rise of modern Islamic popular culture, or ‘pop-Islam’ (Heryanto 2010), as expressed through various forms of Islamic consumption and marketization, is an integral element of both Islamic non-Western modernities and the ‘second wave’ of Islamism.

The question whether the turn toward Islamic consumption and pop-Islam has a *political* impact on the biggest and de facto only local Islamist opposition party, PAS, remains empirically open. Does the cultural turn toward Islamic marketization in the ‘second wave of Islamism’ produce a post-Islamist turn among the PAS Youth? Does the PAS Youth’s exposure to non-Western modernization, globalized communication technologies and higher education undermine its adherence to the holistic ideology of Islamism, and its top-down structure of knowledge transmission? Or does the PAS Youth integrate and subordinate the spectacular rise of marketized Islamic popular culture in order to pursue a substantially Islamist political agenda?

## Notes

- 1 The term ‘popization’ denotes processes of adjustment to popular culture in order to widen popular appeal. It has been used elsewhere for art (Pine 2006: 418) and music (Lucas 2000: 44). In my usage, the ‘popization’ of PAS describes the strategy of adapting the party’s profile and activities to contemporary popular (‘pop’) culture, with the target of increasing PAS’ appeal, especially among the young generation.
- 2 Original footnote in Göle (2002: 174): *Olivier Roy, L’échec de l’Islam politique* (Paris: Seuil, 1992); Gilles Kepel, *Jihad: Expansion et déclin de l’Islamisme* (Paris: Gallimard, 2000).



## 2 The politics of Islam in Malaysia

### Ethnicity and Islam in the Malaysian nation state

In Malaysia, Islam constitutionally enjoys the privileged status of ‘the religion of the Federation’ (Federal Constitution of Malaysia 2010, Article 3 [1]). At the same time, ever since its foundation as an independent state in 1957, Malaysia consists of a thoroughly multi-religious and multi-ethnic society in which more than one-third of the population are non-Muslims. Non-Muslim religions are, at least in constitutional theory, allowed to ‘be practised in peace and harmony’ (ibid.). The largest ethnic group is, and has—with the exception of a short period in the 1930s and 1940s—always been, the Malays, with different sources suggesting that they represent between 50 and 55 percent of the population.<sup>1</sup> Malays are constitutionally required to be Muslims (Federal Constitution of Malaysia 2010, Article 160). Ethnic Chinese make up the second biggest community (24.6 percent in 2010), comprising followers of various religions such as Christianity, Buddhism, Taoism and Islam (Department of Statistics Malaysia 2011, no page). Ethnic Indians (7.3 percent) are the third largest group, consisting of Hindus, Christians and Muslims (Department of Statistics Malaysia 2011, no page). Therefore, although Malaysia is a Malay-majority country, this majority is precarious and has been since the colonial era when the British administration brought in large numbers of Chinese and Indian workers, which led to chronic anxiety among many Malays who feared that they could permanently lose their majority status. According to statistics from 2010, 61.3 percent of the population is Muslim, a majority that faces ‘religious minorities’ that constitute a large part of the general population (ca. 40 percent).<sup>2</sup>

Malays are emically considered and constitutionally protected as the indigenous ‘sons of the soil’ (*bumiputera*). In addition to the 50–55 percent of Malays, another 10 percent of the population is also considered *bumiputera*, consisting of various (multi-religious) non-Malay indigenous groups mainly from the Eastern Malaysian states of Sabah and Sarawak. The *bumiputera* are officially regarded as the native ‘owners’ of the land, while all non-*bumiputera*, such as ethnic Chinese and Indians, have supposedly in-migrated to the region. To date, there are regular cases where non-*bumiputera* are pejoratively labeled *pendatang* (arrivers/migrants), a category that remains popular among significant

parts of the Malay community and the more racist-minded sections of the Malay government party UMNO. Ethnic Chinese and Indian Malaysians often feel insulted by such claims, as many were born to families which have lived on Malaysian soil for several generations and invested tremendous efforts to contribute to the development of their Malaysian homeland alongside the *bumiputera*. However, their status as equal citizens continues to be regularly questioned in public discourse, and many Malays continue to understand the social and political fabric of their state as being based on the claim of Malay Supremacy (*Ketuanan Melayu*). In such controversial and often highly emotional debates about ethnicity, (un-)equal citizenship and different degrees of national 'ownership', the category 'race' is of most crucial discursive importance. All major ethnic groups are labeled in public discourse and indeed largely conceptualize themselves as human 'races', thereby speaking of the 'Malay race' (*bangsa Melayu*), the 'Chinese race' (*bangsa Cina*), and the 'Indian race' (*bangsa India*).<sup>3</sup> Most people in Malaysia understand the term 'race' (*bangsa*), which is often locally used in English, as a natural category, based on the idea of racial (im-)purities and 'pure' or 'mixed' racial 'blood', for example, 'Malay blood' (*darah Melayu*), 'Chinese blood' (*darah Cina*), or various forms of 'mixed blood'. Public discourse, even among many local academics, tends to ignore the de facto historical and social constructedness of these so-called human 'races', although sophisticated studies (Barnard 2004; Kahn 2006; Manickam 2009; Noor 2009; Reid 2001) have illustrated in great depth and detail how the highly fluid, dynamic and flexible category of a 'Malay race' has been created and has changed over time. Manickam argues that 'race was a strategy adopted by Malay intellectuals in a colonial milieu, in line with histories and conditions before and during the period of British control over Malaya', with 'both colonizer and colonized' acting as 'agents of production of colonial knowledge of race' (Manickam 2009: 593). Farish Noor (2009: 76–77) depicts how the concept of races in British Malaya emerged through colonial activities of mapping the population, and how varying groups were officially categorized as members of a 'Malay race' and 'Chinese race' at different times by the British colonial administration, until (almost) an entire nation started to believe that these and other 'races' were stable categories and a natural given.<sup>4</sup>

The way in which the Malaysian Constitution (Article 160 [2]) defines Malayness allows members of other ethnic groups who convert to Islam, are born on Malaysian soil, habitually speak the Malay language, and conform to Malay customs to become members of the Malay 'race' or '*masuk Melayu*' (enter Malayness). A Malay who breaks the taboo and converts to another religion from Islam would logically lose his constitutional status as a member of the 'Malay race'. In reality, however, this does not happen, as in Malaysia conversion from Islam requires formal approval from a Syariah Court which has—to date—never been granted to a Malay citizen.<sup>5</sup>

It is not only ethnic self-definitions and social realities that are governed by concepts of 'race'. Contemporary political discourse is rarely conceivable

beyond the omnipresent boundaries created by the collective imagination of 'race', a status quo which has remained in place ever since Malaysian independence in 1957 (see Warnk 2008: 37). While the ethnic communities live in discursive realities which are largely separate, have 'race'-specific news media (in various languages and scripts), and often follow very different customs in their everyday lives, their political representations are mainly defined with reference to ethnicity and 'race'-based interests. Since the foundation of Malaysia in 1957, a coalition led by an ethnically Malay-defined party, the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) governs the country.<sup>6</sup> This UMNO-led government coalition was formally called the Alliance Party (Parti Perikatan) prior to 1973 and has been referred to since as the Barisan Nasional (BN) or National Front.<sup>7</sup> UMNO conceptualizes itself as the safeguard of 'Malay interests' and the special position that the 'Malay race' enjoys in the country. The second and third largest parties in this government coalition, the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) and the Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC), are, like UMNO, defined purely on ethnic (or 'racial') grounds, and both are generally loyal to UMNO's policies.<sup>8</sup> In recent years, the opposition has made some attempts to dissolve the race-centered structures of party politics and the social contract. However, the consistency and success of such efforts have been very limited.

During the last decade, three parties have formed the political opposition: the Islamic Party of Malaysia (Parti Islam Se-Malaysia, PAS), the socialist Democratic Action Party (DAP), and the People's Justice Party (Parti Keadilan Rakyat, PKR).<sup>9</sup> The vast majority of PAS members are Malays; not one key figure is locally considered a 'pure' ethnic Chinese or Indian. Conversely, DAP is strongly dominated by an ethnic Chinese appearance. Despite—in contrast to UMNO, MCA and MIC—officially defining itself with reference to political ideas (such as democracy, socialism and secularism) rather than ethnicity, in public perception DAP is mostly seen as a 'Chinese party', serving 'Chinese interests', and primarily consisting of ethnic Chinese members. In 2011, DAP decided to launch its own Malay-language internet news portal, *Rocketkini*, in order 'to bolster its image as an all inclusive party and shed its Chinese-centric tag' (*Malaysiakini*, 24 May 2011). However, this move not only illustrates how DAP attempts to overcome the 'Chinese party' image but also that it has not yet managed to escape it. In PKR, most key figures are Malays. Its chief (*ketua umum*), president (*presiden*), deputy president (*timbang presiden*), secretary general (*setiausaha*) and the leaders of its youth and women wings are Malays without exception (as of June 2013). On the lower level of the party's leadership hierarchy, there is a small number of relatively prominent non-Malay politicians, such as Chua Tian Chang, N. Surendran and Elizabeth Wong. Although these three opposition parties, each in its own way, seek to open their organizations to become 'multi-racial' and develop new visions for the country beyond race-based political discourse, to date this has largely remained wishful thinking in terms of real impact. Even within such normatively declared attempts to de-racialize

Malaysian politics, the idea to overcome—or discursively denaturalize—the category of ‘race’ as such, and, for instance, dismiss it on the grounds of its constructedness and colonial background, has never become part of these parties’ political visions, as they mostly opt for ‘unity’ and ‘justice’ ‘between races’ instead.

To understand the ‘racial’ and interrelated religious polarization of Malaysian politics and society today, it is not only necessary to be aware of its colonial trajectory, but also to take Malaysia’s post-colonial history and, most notably, the aftermath of the tragic events of inter-ethnic violence in 1969 into consideration.

### **May 13—the ‘Race Riots’ of 1969**

Throughout Malaysian history, the race-based political order and social separation of ‘racially’ divided lifeworlds has repeatedly revealed its explosive capacity as a source of serious inter-ethnic, or, as the emic term frames it, ‘racial’ conflicts. This occurred in its most dramatic form in 1969, when Kuala Lumpur and other Malaysian towns became civil war-like battlefields, in the low point of Malaysian history which was later labeled the ‘May 13 Incident’ (*Peristiwa Mei 13*) or ‘May 13 Race Riots’ (compare Noor 2004a: 195, 228; Liow 2009: 30–31). While details and circumstances remain disputed to date, for example, in terms of the number of casualties, the role of political parties, alleged involvements of parts of the police and army, and questions about victimhood and guilt (for different accounts, see Comber 2008; Soong 2007), it is clear that hundreds, if not thousands of people died in violent clashes between Malays and Chinese Malaysians. After dozens had been killed and many shops and houses had been attacked in the Chinese-dominated capital of Kuala Lumpur on 13 May, violence started to spread to the nearby state (*negeri*) of Selangor and other parts of the country in the following days and weeks. In its attempts to regain control of the situation, the UMNO-led government under Tunku Abdul Rahman suspended Parliament and declared a state of emergency. Until 1971, the country was governed by the National Operations Council (NOC/Majlis Gerakan Negara, MAGERAN), controlled by UMNO.<sup>10</sup> After leading UMNO for almost 20 years, Malaysia’s first prime minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, was forced to resign in 1970. His successor, Tun Abdul Razak, who was supported by the influential upcoming UMNO factions of ‘Young Turks’ and racial ‘ultras’ (Comber 2008: 77), reportedly ‘sidelined’ (Soong 2007: 104) Tunku Abdul Rahman and was one of the key figures behind his resignation in September 1970.<sup>11</sup> Before the bloodshed, the ‘Tunku’s’ government coalition had suffered a dramatic loss of support in the General Elections on 10 May 1969, three days before the events of 13 May. Demonstrations were held immediately after the polls by both Chinese and Malay groups, with fierce accusations and provocations from both sides, a dynamic that finally culminated in the mass killings on 13 May and the violent weeks afterwards. In the years before 1969, heated

debates had taken place between Malay groups calling for more radical measures to institutionalize Malay Supremacy (*Ketuanan Melayu*), whereas some Chinese groups were aggressively demanding their 'racial' interests to be protected, with some non-Malay opposition members arguing for a 'Malaysian Malaysia' instead of Malay privilege (Liow 2009: 30).<sup>12</sup> By 1971, after this traumatic period in Malaysian history, a new generation of Malay racialist hardliners gained control of the leadership of UMNO, with the agenda to restore peace and order in the country while at the same time realizing the ideal of Malay Supremacy through resolute and concrete political actions, largely backed by the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) and the Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC).

In an attempted inclusivist–constructive nation building, whereby a dual approach took place vis-à-vis UMNO's preparation of a more radical implementation of the exclusivist paradigm of Malay Supremacy, a four-pillar-based 'national philosophy' called *Rukun Negara* was announced in 1970 under Tunku Abdul Rahman, shortly before his resignation and the UMNO-ultras' and Young Turks' takeover (Comber 2008: 79–81). Structurally mirroring comparable pillar-models like *Pancasila* in Indonesia, *Melayu Islam Beraja* (MIB) in Brunei Darussalam, or *Liberté, égalité, fraternité* in France, it grounds itself on 'core principles' of the Malaysian nation, including: Belief in God (*Kepercayaan Kepada Tuhan*), Loyalty to the King and Country (*Kesetiaan Kepada Raja Dan Negara*), Upholding the Constitution (*Keluruhan Perlembagaan*), Sovereignty of the Laws (*Kedaulatan Undang-Undang*), and Politeness and Morality (*Kesopanan Dan Kesusilaan*). The concept, however, could also be regarded as normative lip-service rather than a concrete political program, given the contradictory simultaneity of the inclusivist—and to some extent pluralist—*Rukun Negara* and the exclusivist realities of Malaysian politics and society ever since the state's Declaration of Independence.

### **The New Economic Policy (NEP)**

In 1971, after the re-establishment of parliament and the lifting of emergency rule, the Malaysian government under Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak launched a far-reaching program to enhance the status of the Malays and *bumiputera*, which were—by both UMNO and PAS—perceived to be in deepest need of economic, social and demographic protection. This initiative, the Malaysian New Economic Policy (NEP) or Dasar Ekonomi Baru (DEB), was initially planned to last 20 years. Although *bumiputera* had already enjoyed a constitutionally privileged status in comparison to all other ethnic groups before the events in 1969 (Federal Constitution of Malaysia 2010, Article 153), since the enactment of the NEP a number of new regulations and mechanisms have been created to 'protect' the supposedly threatened 'sons' (and daughters) 'of the soil'. The program aimed at reducing disparities between *bumiputera* and particularly Chinese parts of the population, and was based on the idea that the—at that time largely rural—Malays lagged

behind in terms of socio-economic development. Accordingly, to alleviate these perceived inequalities, *bumiputera* were granted privileged access to the education sector (for example, scholarships, access to institutions of higher learning, etc.), bank credit, and employment in the civil service. The government declared that if the program were to be successful, Malays should have a 30 percent share in the national economy, thereby reducing 'racial' inequalities, restructuring the economy and achieving 'national harmony' (Abdullah 1997: 191). Ironically, the program, developed to achieve socio-economic *equality*, required that the non-*bumiputera* were—and continue to be—treated *unequal* in the respective sectors of state and society. At the same time, although the NEP was developed to 'empower' Malays, the fact that under the program they needed to exert much less effort than other ethnic groups, particularly in the educational and economic sectors, ran counter to the long-term sustainability of such 'empowerment'. In 1990, when the NEP's envisioned 20-year time frame had expired, the UMNO-led government argued that the program needed to be extended, as the 30 percent target had still not been achieved; all the while, arguments about contradicting statistics were exchanged, and continue to date. Therefore, many elements of the NEP, such as privileged access to education and the civil service, have remained in place, organized under the National Development Policy (NDP) between 1990 and 2000, followed by the National Vision Policy (NVP), finally replaced by a program which has been called the New Economic Policy since 2005. Opposition members such as the prominent DAP leader Lim Kit Siang (2006) have loudly protested against extending the NEP 'from a 20-year into a 50-year policy'. Until today the UMNO-led government believes that *bumiputera* are still economically inferior and have not yet reached the targeted 30 percent equity, while many non-Malay critics claim—mostly in silence—that it was precisely the continuation of the *bumiputeras'* structural privileges that prevented the 'protected' Malays from being truly competitive and hard-working.

Up to the early 1980s, PAS supported the racist Malay ethno-nationalism that ideologically fueled the NEP policy. However, since 1982–83 when spirited and mostly Middle Eastern-trained youth led a radical party-internal transformation, the Islamic Party has increasingly called to abandon race-based privileges, construing them as 'un-Islamic' *'asabiyyah* (communitarianism/tribalism/ethno-centrism). The PAS' Spiritual Leader (*Mursyidul 'Am*), Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat, has repeatedly demanded that the government change the concept *Ketuanan Melayu* (Malay Supremacy) to *Ketuanan Islam* (Islamic Supremacy) (see, for example, *The Malaysian Insider*, 9 June 2010.). This would provide privileges for Islam and all Muslims instead of just Muslim Malays, replacing one institutionalized structure of unequal citizenship and communitarianism with another, based on a different, religious instead of ethnic, order of justification.<sup>13</sup> Despite the tendency in PAS to gradually replace the exclusivist race-fixation with an exclusivist Islam-fixation, the 'race question' continues to be of significant importance in political discourses and social

realities in Malaysia, perpetuating an ethnic separation which has led many to question whether there is a single or multiple Malaysian nation(s).<sup>14</sup> More than 50 years since the Declaration of Independence, government attempts at nation building and inclusivist cultural politics vis-à-vis national identity have failed to bring about a situation whereby people identify themselves as Malaysians (*bangsa Malaysia*) first, despite numerous campaigns and slogans aiming at this result. These attempts lacked success not only because of the general race-obsessed social atmosphere, but also due to their half-hearted enactment which always happened simultaneously with the thoroughly 'race'-centered political structures, governmental policies, and mindset that continue to dominate public discourses in Malaysia. Within this race-obsessed ethno-political framework, revivalist Islamist politics rose to previously unseen heights in the 1970s and 1980s, facilitated by transnational developments within the larger Muslim world and the local 'revivalist' Islamic student and *dakwah* movements of that time (see Abdul Hamid 2002, 2007; Lyon 1979; Nagata 1980, 1984; Anwar 1987).

### **The Islamist turn: Malay political counterculture in the 1970s and 1980s**

While the inability to overcome the pervasive boundaries of politicized ethnicity is a dilemma for the modern Malaysian nation state, the field of religion represents another powerful source of separation and exclusivist communitarianism which further complicates the country's social fabric.

Islam has a centuries-long history in the Malay world, and since the early twentieth century, Middle Eastern-inspired modernist Islamic reformism has taken firm root on the Malay Peninsula. For that reason, some have questioned whether the impact of Islamist activism in the 1970s could properly be labeled an 'Islamic revival', given that 'Islam has been entrenched in every layer of society for more than a century' (Lemière 2010a: 9). Localized Islamic reformist aspirations can be traced back at least to the early 1900s, when Malay students who had studied in the Middle East brought new streams of thought with them upon their return to Southeast Asia. Due to these transnational interactions, translations of and references to texts written by key figures such as Muhammad Abduh (1849–1905) and his student Rashid Rida (1865–1935) were disseminated for the first time in the Malay world and appropriated into local nationalist, Islamic leftist and anti-colonial movements (see Bluhm 1983; Burhanudin 2001; Roff 1970).

In the 1970s and 1980s, a new generation of Muslim student activists emerged on the scene and became a significant agent of change within the country's political landscape, this time not fighting an Islamic nationalist struggle against colonialism, but calling for an all-encompassing Islamic macro- and micro-order of state and society in Malaysia. This new generation introduced a previously unseen intense emphasis on Islamist ideologies as the superior source of envisioned social, economic, public, political and legal

normative orders. Although this Malay Islamist movement was diverse, both in terms of ideological details and activities, its members used a decidedly anti-secular brand of Islam as a crucial point of reference, adding an increasingly strong political Islamic dimension to the pre-existing race-obsessed discourse.<sup>15</sup> These groups' activities covered a wide range, from (mostly Muslim-internal) missionary work (*dakwah*) and fighting poverty in rural areas, to morally policing campuses. In addition to the racial communitarianism another form of exclusivism became increasingly popular. This worldview considers itself to be grounded in the best intentions a human being could possibly have, but de facto separates people first and foremost into Muslims and non-Muslims, the 'pure' (*al-mukminin*) versus the impure 'non-believers' (*kafir/kufar*), or the trustworthy 'brothers/sisters' versus religiously defined suspicious *outsiders* who, due to their infidelity, if they do not convert to Islam, will be condemned to hell. Accordingly, non-Muslims were increasingly perceived to be practicing 'immoral' cultural lifestyles, particularly in the realms of behavior, dress, food, arts, dance, music and entertainment, as opposed to a pure (*mukmin*) or 'legally-allowed-by-God' (*halal*) all-encompassing Islamic way of life (*ad-din*). This increased 'religious awareness' and the process of 'haramization' (Peletz 2011: 137) against non-Muslims as a consequence of the popular 'halalization' (Fischer 2008: 29–32) drive in Malay society were not helpful for uniting the fragmented Malaysian society during its nation-building process, creating further alienation between different groups instead. The effects of this fragmentation caused by the newly emerging, transnationally inspired Islamist discourses of the 1970s and 1980s were not limited to the Muslim versus non-Muslim divide; within the Malay-Muslim community, a sheer unbridgeable communalism between religiously defined in- and out-groups or 'good Muslims' versus 'bad Muslims' became a powerful norm. Prominently, dramatic hostilities arose between the two biggest Malay-Muslim parties, PAS and UMNO, with categorical Othering and the expression of deepest emotional enmities over religio-political questions and the authority to speak for 'true' Islam as their discursive battleground. One sub-text of this conflict relates to the question of power and hegemony, as discursive control over the Malay majority population is the ultimate pre-requisite for political power over the country as a whole (compare Noor 2005: 122).

### **The Islamist turn within PAS and UMNO in the 1980s**

By 1982–83, when Islamist Young Turks took over PAS and ousted the previous PAS leader, Mohamad Asri Muda, who had joined the BN coalition between 1973 and 1978, the stage was clear for a weighty relational dynamic that later became known as the Malaysian 'Islamization race' (Noor 2003: 79; Liow 2004, 2007: 182; Anwar 2005: 122). PAS and its 'traditional nemesis UMNO' (Noor 2004a: 242, 2004b: 749) had competed over Malay support ever since PAS was founded as an offspring of UMNO in 1951 (Abdul Hamid 2009a: 150; Funston 1976: 70; Noor 2004a: 72 ff.), with only a short



intermission of relative calm between 1973 and 1978 (Noor 2004a: 253 ff.). However, the early and mid-1980s marked a pivotal point, with the escalating 'holier-than-thou' (Chong 2006: 33; Anwar 2005: 121) 'battle for the legitimacy of Islam' (Martinez 2005: 151) between PAS and UMNO becoming the most central field of Malay political competition. These conflicts about Islamic legitimacy and Muslim Malay votes have become a leitmotif of Malaysian politics, particularly since the early 1980s when PAS disentangled itself from Barisan Nasional and a new generation of mostly Middle Eastern-educated Islamist leaders such as Yusuf Rawa, Fadzil Noor, Abdul Hadi Awang and Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat fundamentally changed the party's political course. The competition between PAS and UMNO entered a new era when Mahathir Mohamad became prime minister in 1981 and the UMNO-led government started to actively institutionalize various Islamization policies and laws. They include the Islamic Banking Act 1983, Islamic Family Law (Federal Territories) Act 1984, the Syariah Criminal Procedures (Federal Territories) Act 1997 as well as no less than 122 State Enactments and Ordinances pertaining to Islamic matters on the state level before 2005 (Faruqi 2005: 256–57). As Zainah Anwar (2005: 123) has summarized, new:

Islamic laws were introduced or existing laws were amended ... Shari'a criminal laws were passed ... New offences were created, and moral surveillance, enforcement and more severe punishment of Muslims were introduced. Eating in public during the month of *Ramadhan*, consuming alcoholic beverages in public, women or men indulging in cross-dressing, homosexuality, lesbianism, indecent behavior became punishable Shari'a crimes. The Islamic family law ... was amended to make divorce and polygamy easier for men and to reduce men's financial responsibilities towards women. The Administration of Islamic Law was amended to ensure that fatwas issued by the state *mufti* would be given the automatic force of law, once they are gazetted, without going through the legislative process.

Mahathir understood the signs of the time well, and sought to integrate the popular waves of Islamic resurgence into the state apparatus by trying to implement a 'top-down' instead of 'bottom-up' Islamization process (Stauth 2002: 15–16, 187). Islamization under Mahathir was 'a centralized, concerted and controlled process ... "from above"' (Stauth 2002: 216), shaped by legal institutionalizations and the 'co-opting and sponsoring Islamic intellectuals from a strong socio-religious movement of anti-establishment groups into state educational and cultural institutions' (ibid.: 15–16, 187). Besides strengthening Syariah law in the country (which exists alongside secular courts in Malaysia, has limited responsibilities, and is—in theory—only applicable for Muslims), in a spectacular political maneuver Mahathir convinced one of the most popular Islamist youth activists, Anwar Ibrahim, to switch sides. Anwar Ibrahim had previously been the leader of the Malaysian

Islamic Youth Movement (Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia, ABIM).<sup>16</sup> In 1974, Anwar was arrested in relation to protests against Malay poverty in Kedah (and elsewhere), and was detained without trial under the Internal Security Act (ISA) for 20 months, which further increased his reputation as a morally upright fighter for Islamic values and social justice. In 1983, Mahathir chose this icon of the Islamist counter culture to be the minister of culture, youth and sports, thereby offering Anwar the opportunity to bring about changes from within the state apparatus. Later, Anwar headed several other ministries and even became deputy prime minister in 1993.<sup>17</sup>

During Mahathir's tenure UMNO increasingly shifted parts of its political rhetoric to Islamist wording, and by 'officializing Islamic discourse' (Stauth 2002: 198) to some extent took the oppositional 'wind out of PAS's' and other Islamist groups' 'sails' (Liow 2009: 41). Conversely, PAS demanded further Islamization policies, claiming that UMNO's approach to Islam was hypocritical (*munafiq*), 'only cosmetic' (Stark 2004: 11), and was a result of tactical considerations rather than sincere conviction. The historically generated dispute over Islamic legitimacy and political power, or 'piety trumping' (Liow 2009: 13, 15) between UMNO and PAS, reflects their mutually constitutive relationship during the last 30 years (Noor 2004b: 743–45), in which they constantly (re-)defined themselves in opposition to each other, with far-reaching impacts on state and society. Most scholars univocally hold that, in the course of this 'Islamization race', both parties tried to 'out-Islam' (Liow 2009: 111), 'out-Islamize' (Noor 2004b: 724) or 'out-Islamicize' (Peletz 2002: 11) each other. Despite the fact that many perceive PAS as the main Islamist actor, while UMNO 'felt obliged' (Camroux 1996: 856–57) to 'react' (Stauth 2002: 197), Joseph Liow (2009) argues that this view must be corrected by highlighting the integration of orthodox Islamist tendencies within UMNO and the legal institutionalization and bureaucratic enforcement of such anti-pluralist orthodoxy, which in his view often happened largely independent of PAS. Indeed, UMNO has founded an ever-growing Islamic bureaucratic apparatus, a symptomatic process for the religio-political atmosphere that Liow refers to as the 'bureaucratization of Islam' (Liow 2007: 178, 2009: 43; Mohamad 2010). This Islamist-legalist bureaucratization of Islam was institutionalized by none other than the Islamist party PAS' adversary UMNO, which many foreign observers claim to be the 'moderate' bulwark against Islamism, although it can nowadays be considered an Islamist party itself.

### **Carrot, stick and martyrdom: the escalation of the UMNO–PAS rivalry**

Both BN's and particularly UMNO's reaction to the waves of politicized Islamization in the Malay community were multifaceted. UMNO fought the opposition, Islamic and non-Islamic alike, by selectively playing the Islam and race cards, and offering large numbers of Malays job opportunities and other material incentives. Employing an effective carrot-stick strategy, UMNO

also relied on the iron fist of severe repression. The Internal Security Act 1960 (ISA), which until its repeal in 2012 (and replacement by the Security Offences (Special Measures) 2012 Act) allowed detention without trial whenever state authorities made a claim of a threat to national security, was frequently used against opposition activists, particularly in the 1970s and 1980s. According to the Malaysian human rights activist Kua Kia Soong (2011, no page), 'more than 10,000 Malaysians have been incarcerated under the ISA since 1960'. Many former ISA detainees from this period are currently key figures in the Pakatan Rakyat (PR) opposition coalition.<sup>18</sup> Not only were opposition members intimidated, closely observed and sharply limited in terms of access to media and (the lack of) freedom of assembly, but the situation also turned violent at some points. To date, PAS regularly mourns its 'martyrs' (*syahid*) who died at the hands of (UMNO-controlled) Malaysian police and security services during the tragedy of the 'Memali incident/massacre' (*Peristiwa Memali*).<sup>19</sup> Ustaz Ibrahim 'Libya',<sup>20</sup> a popular PAS (and former PAS Youth) activist who was known for his radical rhetoric (*takfir*-style<sup>21</sup>) that declared UMNO a *kafir* (infidel) and was sympathetic towards the idea of an Islamic revolution (Noor 2004b: 400), was killed at the age of 45 in the village of Memali (Kedah) by government forces on 19 November 1985, along with four policemen and 15 other persons. More than 500 armed governmental security forces were present, when shortly after his morning lecture at a *madrasah* a disastrous raid began. Among those killed was also Ahmad Hassan, the former head of the PAS Youth in Kuala Kedah (1979–81).<sup>22</sup>

One year later, on 27 October 1987, in an orchestrated mass arrest called *Operasi Lalang* (literally: Weeding Operation), 106 persons were detained, comprising opposition politicians, civil society activists and even a handful of UMNO and MCA members (Noor 2004b: 422–26). In reaction to a rising controversy about the government's behavior toward Chinese vernacular schools, during which the UMNO Youth had staged an anti-Chinese demonstration on 17 October 1987 (with slogans like 'Revoke the citizenship of those who oppose Malay rulers' and 'May 13 has begun', see Noor 2004b: 422), the government banned the UMNO demonstration. Shortly afterwards, however, mostly oppositional 'troublemakers' were arrested under the ISA. Among the detainees were Lim Kit Siang (DAP), Karpal Singh (DAP) and the PAS Youth Chief Halim Arshat.<sup>23</sup> Forty persons were imprisoned without trial in the infamous ISA prison in Kamunting (Johor) for two years, including several PAS, PAS Youth and DAP members. Additionally, a number of newspapers were banned. In the opposition parties' collective memory, *Operasi Lalang* has become a symbol of 'injustice' and government 'oppression'. In the same year, several PAS and PAS Youth members such as Mohamad Sabu (who had been detained earlier without trial for supposed attempts to import the Iranian revolution) were arrested for allegedly stirring up anti-Christian sentiments (Noor 2004b: 424). Although some PAS members including PAS President Yusof Rawa had indeed been actively campaigning against Christian

missionary activities and the government's alleged lack of action against them, Jomo (1988: 9–10) argues that those arrested were ironically at the forefront of trying to pave the way for interreligious dialogue (see also Noor 2004b: 424). Furthermore, several PAS members such as Zainuddin Abdullah and Omar Khalid were detained in 1987 for building a shadowy militant organization with the aim of an Islamic State, the so-called *Tentera Allah* or *Jundullah*. Such mass arrests without trial or publicized evidence have led to an impression that 'large prison camps continue to characterize the political arena in Malaysia' (Stauth 2002: 190).

In addition to the 'stick' component of the strategy to fight against Islamist and other oppositional challenges to Mahathir's regime, UMNO also relied on 'carrot'-like methods. In 1988 UMNO raised the status of Syariah Courts through the Constitutional Amendment Act in order to assure the maintenance of support from the increasingly 'Islamized' Malay electorate (Noor 2004b: 427). Soon after, in 1988, another massive operation was led against PAS: *Operasi Kenari 88*. Thirty-one party members were arrested under the ISA following a series of confrontations between PAS and police as well as Special Branch (SB) troops in Perak and Kedah (Noor 2004b: 431).<sup>24</sup> The police had accused PAS Youth supporters of storing weapons at a PAS-led center for *tarbiyah* (Islamic education), the Muassah Darul Ulum in Kedah, but when security troops entered the compound they were unable to locate any weapons and instead met sharp protests from local PAS supporters. These PAS members staged a martial arts (*silat*) performance in front of the Special Branch officers, who finally closed down the scene, without bloodshed (ibid.: 433). Fauzi Ismail, one of the PAS Youth members at the scene, was later killed while fighting together with the *mujahidin* against the Russian army in Afghanistan.

Despite the fact that many allegations against PAS and the opposition were questionable (or at times proven to be false), the government's excessive political usage of state institutions, such as the police, and laws, such as the Internal Security Act, must also be understood in relation to the opposition's martial anti-government rhetoric in the 1980s. During that period, PAS leaders such as Abdul Hadi Awang repeatedly declared UMNO an 'infidel' (*kafir*) and symbolically called for holy war against it (Liow 2009: 38). At that time, several PAS members were heavily inspired by the Islamic Revolution in Iran (1979) and visited Iran in order to learn more about the 'success' of the Iranian revolutionaries (Sabu 2010), which may have further inspired their hope—and passionate attempts—to bring about radical change.<sup>25</sup> In Malaysia, the hostile separation between the PAS and UMNO camp became increasingly worse, for example, 'some marriages had to be solemnized twice, once each by an UMNO and PAS *alim*',<sup>26</sup> and even some 'cemeteries were segregated' (Liow 2009: 38). The practice of *takfir* developed local roots in the early 1980s, as the PAS' 'Young Turks' played key roles in this development (Noor 2004b: 740–43). In an infamous speech on 7 April 1981, which went down in Malaysian history books as *Amanat Haji Hadi* (Edict of Haji Hadi), the, at

that time Young Turk and today PAS President (*Presiden PAS*), Abdul Hadi Awang, defined the three main principles of PAS' political 'fight' against UMNO (Liow 2009: 38; Noor 2004b: 740): First, UMNO and BN had preserved an infidel constitution from the colonial era; second, any financial donations, speeches or other PAS activities were to be regarded as a *jihad* in the context of the struggle against UMNO, and those who would die in that struggle were to be considered martyrs; and third, being a *kafir* (infidel) was not limited to other religions, as one could become a *kafir* supporting the secularist separation of politics and religion (Liow 2009: 38). In turn, in 1984 the government's National Fatwa Council (Majlis Fatwa Kebangsaan) issued a *fatwa* that deemed the *Amanat Haji Hadi* to be against the teachings of Islam (Liow 2009: 38).

In 2012, the former PAS member Zainol Ismail, who is well-known among PAS members by his nickname C. N. Afghani (which he received for fighting alongside Afghan *mujahidin* against the Russians in the 1980s), claimed publicly that he had been involved in an attempt by PAS members to kill Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad in 1987. He also claimed having been part of a small underground militia, called Kumpulan Militan Kedah (KMK), who wanted to fight the 'UMNO infidels' and, if necessary, 'die as martyrs' (*mati syahid*) during that time (Zainol Ismail quoted in Outsied the Box 2012, no page). Although these statements of a once highly respected PAS member are difficult to substantiate, and many PAS members would likely suspect him having been paid by UMNO to say such things, it is clear the PAS–UMNO conflict of the 1980s was not far from turning into a violent large-scale escalation. The *kafir-mengafir* (mutual accusations of being an infidel) atmosphere between the two constitutive Others, PAS and UMNO, worsened until the mid-1980s, when three PAS Youth leaders, Abu Bakar Chik, Bunyamin Yaakob and Mohamad Sabu were arrested under the ISA because of unproven rumors that PAS members were preparing an all-out armed struggle. In 1985, the government declared PAS once again an Islamic extremist organization, adding, however, that communists—the traditional Malaysian bugbear—'were manipulating PAS to generate rifts that would achieve their antidemocratic aims' (Liow 2009: 39). It was in that atmosphere that the 'Memali massacre' occurred. At the same time, PAS managed to further disentangle itself from its Malay racist ideological tradition (Liow 2009: 39), paving the way for the current PAS that, in contrast to UMNO, seeks to replace Malay Supremacy with Islamic Supremacy.

The near-violent atmosphere of the 1980s and 1990s was gradually replaced with more subtle and increasingly ritualized forms of mutual Othering between the two parties, and nowadays, accusations of being truly an infidel have become comparably rare. The tone is only relatively softened, though; UMNO and other local Muslim opponents are currently, and especially by the younger generation in PAS, often labeled as *munaifiq* (hypocrite), *agen barat* (Western agents) or 'secularists' instead of *kafir* (although some PAS members, and election banners, still use the term). Some PAS members also

advocate a more balanced position. Suhaizan Kaiat, a contemporary PAS Youth key figure, emphasizes that for him, despite their perceived moral shortcomings, UMNO members are also ‘brothers’ in Islam:

UMNO are my brothers. Brotherhood. But different thinking. They are, we are brothers, it is my brotherhood. But UMNO thinks different from me. We want the need of *Allah Ta’ala*, we do everything for the need of *Allah Ta’ala*, to fulfill the responsibilities for *Allah Ta’ala*, but UMNO does everything for the party. Different thinking. Different direction. The important thing for PAS is *ibadah*.<sup>27</sup> The important thing for UMNO is materialism. That is the difference.

(Interview with Suhaizan Kaiat, Kuala Lumpur, 16 December 2009)

Retrospectively, during my interview with the current PAS President Abdul Hadi Awang 30 years after the *Amanat Haji Hadi*, he laughingly admitted that in his earlier days he had been a ‘hot blooded’ (*darah panas*) and often ‘radical-speaking’ (*bercakap dengan kenyataan-kenyataan radikal*) young man, adding that this was the typical ‘spirit of youth’ (*semangat pemuda*), which was legitimate but needed to be controlled (*dikawal*) by elders (interview with Abdul Hadi Awang, Kuala Lumpur, 30 March 2010). Elsewhere in 2010, the aged Abdul Hadi emphasized that PAS itself could not declare who was *kafir* and who not; instead it could only explain what, on a theological level, the character of true Islamic faith (*aqidah*), infidelity (*kufur*), un-Islamic ignorance (*jahiliyah*) and sin (*dosa*) would be (*The Malaysian Insider*, 13 February 2010).

Currently, some PAS members are even in favor of a—rather unlikely and highly controversial—project of a Unity Government (*Kerajaan Perpaduan*) that would include UMNO, seeking to exert *dakwah* on UMNO rather than fighting it. Obviously, 30 years after the *Amanat Haji Hadi* and 25 years after the ‘Memali massacre’, a different tone has taken root in the—nevertheless still often fierce and highly emotional—battles between PAS and UMNO. While some claim that nowadays Hadi is open to more cooperation with UMNO (compare Wikileaks, 30 July 2008), even those who categorically reject this idea, such as PAS’ Spiritual Leader Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat, refrain from *takfir*. At the same time, Nik Abdul Aziz still argues that UMNO members would likely be denied access to heaven (*syurga*) because they rejected the full governmental implementation of Islamic laws (see, for example, *Bernama*, 17 August 2009; *The Star*, 7 April 2013).

Clearly, in the last few years, a relative de-escalation of anti-UMNO rhetoric has taken place, and when PAS Youth members passionately shout ‘*UMNO Yahudi!*’ (UMNO Jews!) these days (Müller 2010: 772), it is far less deadly serious than the earlier-described escalations in the 1980s had been. This is also tied to the fact that over the course of 30 years of the ‘Islamization race’ and the implementation of numerous laws by the UMNO-led government, many—but certainly not all—normative disagreements between PAS and

UMNO over which role Islam *should* play in Malaysian society have disappeared. Ibrahim Abu Bakar (2009, no page) even argues that despite their polemics, nowadays UMNO is the 'political party nearest to PAS'. Beyond their identitarian opposition as constitutive Others, PAS and UMNO indeed have increasingly much in common, especially in the field of Syariah-based politics. One of the most fiercely debated and politicized remaining difference, however, is the question whether or not Islamic penal code (*hudud/qisas*) should be implemented. Although UMNO has already introduced various forms of Islamic Criminal Law (for instance, 22 women were caned as the 'first batch of syariah offenders' in the UMNO-controlled state of Johor in 2013, *Malaysiakini*, 13 June 2013), it still refuses to enact laws under the legal framework of *hudud/qisas*.

### **The detention of Anwar Ibrahim and the *reformasi* movement**

The concept that personalities of politicians often appear to be more important than political programs is not isolated to Malaysia but is, however, particularly noteworthy in the country, as 'political' discourse is often obsessed with questions about personality, moral integrity and private life. Therefore, what may sound like an irrelevant 'yellow-press' to non-Malaysian observers is often at the very heart of local political debates. This tendency is most dramatically and tragically exemplified by the case of Anwar Ibrahim.

While Mahathir successfully portrayed himself as a 'strong' leader who stood for economic development and progress, incorporating a non- (or anti-) Western twist either framed in Islamic terms, or alternatively under the Asian values<sup>28</sup> and Look East<sup>29</sup> slogans, Anwar Ibrahim stood loyally besides Mahathir and was regarded to be his likely successor throughout the 1990s.<sup>30</sup> However, the course of history took a dramatic turn, as by 1998 the prime minister *in spe* was removed from his posts and charged with corruption and 'sodomy' (homosexual intercourse).<sup>31</sup> Even though the allegations that Anwar Ibrahim and some of his family members and political allies had made illegal profits from the allocation of government contracts may not sound entirely unimaginable, reportedly being a rather 'normal' practice in Malaysia until today (see, for example, *Forbes*, 6 December 2008), the fact that the charges were made against such a high-ranking UMNO politician at this particular time leaves little doubt that they were politically motivated, and orchestrated—or at least approved—by Anwar's mentor Mahathir. In 1999, Anwar was sentenced to six years for corruption and in 2000 to nine years in jail for sodomy. After a review of the second court decision, he was released in 2004. Following his arrest in 1999, he was beaten up by a high-ranking police officer;<sup>32</sup> pictures of the results of this 'black eye incident' were used by opposition supporters as a symbol of police and governmental cruelty.<sup>33</sup> Behind bars, he prepared a spectacular political comeback as an opposition politician. His wife Wan Azizah Wan Ismail became the leader of a newly founded party, KeADILan (justice), which included not only a desire to bring down BN as one of its central political concerns, but also calls for

the release of Anwar Ibrahim. Following his release, Anwar was banned from politics until 2008, but served as de facto leader of KeADILan, which by then had become PKR (Parti Keadilan Rakyat, People's Justice Party).

Anwar's arrest in 1998 resulted in a massive oppositional mobilization—and temporal strategic unification—which culminated into what became known as the Malaysian *reformasi* (reform) movement (see, for example, Kim 2005). Although the name stems from the Indonesian *reformasi* movement that ousted President Suharto in 1998, the Malaysian movement of the same name was neither comparable in terms of size nor outcome. Nevertheless, for Malaysian standards it was a groundbreaking historic moment, in which such contrasting opposition parties like the Islamist PAS and the secularist DAP surprisingly started to align, together with similarly diverse civil society actors, in order to bring down the decades-long rule of BN.<sup>34</sup> Although it did not succeed in realizing its final goal, the *reformasi* movement changed the political landscape significantly. It paved the way for the political opposition as it is structured today, with PAS, DAP and PKR (at that time consisting of two parties called KeADILan and Parti Rakyat Malaysia which later merged into PKR) working—more or less—side-by-side in a newly founded coalition called Barisan Alternatif (later called Pakatan Rakyat) to bring down BN.

Anwar officially re-joined the Parliament as a top opposition leader in 2008, fighting against the same BN government coalition that had once made him one of the most powerful politicians in the country. In 2008, the opposition was able to secure a landslide 'victory' during the General Election, even though BN and UMNO still held the majority (63 percent of parliamentary seats, 50.2 percent of votes). This was in direct contrast to the 2004 elections, where the opposition, and especially PAS, performed particularly badly after a candid PAS campaign for an Islamic State that partly led to the crumbling and final split of the Barisan Alternatif in 2004, when DAP categorically rejected an Islamic State and felt betrayed by PAS' behavior (interview with DAP Socialist Youth leader Anthony Loke Siew Fook, Seremban, 3 March 2010). In the aftermath of 2008, PAS, DAP and PKR were able to revive their once-failed coalition under a new umbrella—the Pakatan Rakyat (PR). However, two months after the elections, in June 2008, more charges were filed against Anwar Ibrahim, accusing him of a renewed case of 'sodomy' alleging that he had forcefully committed anal sex with one of his political aides, Mohamad Saiful Bukhari Azlan. The supposed-victim, Saiful, later admitted that he had consulted the then Deputy Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak, before filing the police report (*Bernama*, 3 July 2008). The dubious court case pertaining to this alleged homosexual intercourse was ongoing until January 2012, when Anwar was—to the surprise of many—finally acquitted of all charges. In 2013, the 'victim's' father even stated that Anwar was innocent, and that his son had lied because of an 'evil political conspiracy' (*The Malaysian Insider*, 8 March 2013). Nevertheless, the lengthy court case has apparently further smeared Anwar Ibrahim's character and integrity in public perception, in line with the government's political interests.



### **The post-Mahathir era: ‘Pak Lah’ and the short-lived *Islam Hadhari* project**

When Mahathir’s more than two decades-long tenure came to an end in 2003, he had lost a large amount of his powerful aura as a result of the aftermath of Anwar Ibrahim’s arrest and the emergence of public outrage over endemic corruption within BN. Consequently, his successor Abdullah Ahmad Badawi was in a position of enormous popularity, as the more religiously minded Malay public lauded his prestigious family background, religious credentials and his distance from Mahathir. By portraying himself as a cosmopolitan champion of a ‘progressive’ brand of ‘civilizational Islam’ (*Islam Hadhari*) during the 2003–4 election campaign, Badawi was able to initially gain great credibility among large sections of the population, a direct result of his highly positive public perception.

Badawi’s grandfather, Syeikh Abdullah Badawi Fahim, had been an Arab migrant to Malaysia, a religious scholar born in Mecca (Saudi Arabia), and well-known activist in the Malay nationalist struggle for Independence.<sup>35</sup> Ironically, Abdullah Fahim—who would later become Penang’s first State Mufti—had been one of the founders of Hizbul Muslimin (Ismail 2009: 185; Abdul Hamid 2009b: 22), the predecessor to PAS, which later became his grandson’s most important political opponent. Before Abdullah Fahim’s involvement in PAS, he had been an ‘influential *ulama* in UMNO’s religious section’ (Abdul Hamid 2009b: 22). Abdullah Ahmad Badawi’s father, Haji Ahmad Badawi, was a renowned Islamic scholar as well (Abdul Hamid 2009b: 22), and, according to Liew Chin Tong (2007: 108), he was also involved in the foundation of PAS. Abdullah Ahmad Badawi himself holds a B.A. degree in Islamic Studies from the renowned University of Malaya (UM) and received ‘intensive Islamic training at his father’s *madrasah* in Penang’ (Warnk 2010: 116), which further ameliorated his ‘Islamic’ reputation and perceived moral credibility. It seems that his family legacy substantially enhanced Abdullah Ahmad Badawi’s appeal especially among Muslim Malaysians, and attributed to his success during the election.

To his initial advantage, Abdullah Ahmad Badawi was not regarded to be overly close to Mahathir. When a historic split had occurred within UMNO in the 1980s between two camps, the so-called ‘Team A’ led by Mahathir and the so-called ‘Team B’ led by Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah and Musa Hitam, Badawi had opposed Mahathir and was removed from a government post after Mahathir’s ‘Team A’ emerged as the winner of the battle (Teik 1997: 68–69). Although Mahathir finally brought Badawi back into the government and made him minister of foreign affairs (1991–99), he apparently never fully trusted Badawi. His appointment enabled Badawi to remain active on the political scene; however, the history of mistrust between the two ensured that despite Badawi’s inclusion in Mahathir’s government, the public did not perceive Badawi to be directly associated with Mahathir. Furthermore, the public was reassured of this divide during Badawi’s time in office, particularly by a

spectacular fallout that caused Mahathir to theatrically distance himself from Badawi.

When Badawi took over the government in 2003, expectations for his leadership in an anticipated 'era of transition' (Ooi 2006, 2008) were high. He had announced that he would fight the endemic corruption within the state apparatus and indeed there were some promising steps at the beginning of his term, such as arrests of prominent politicians from his own party and the empowerment of anti-corruption bodies. In the General Elections of 2004, he achieved a spectacular victory for BN and was partly responsible for PAS' dramatic loss, after the probably most Islamic authenticity-obsessed pre-election rivalry between PAS and UMNO in Malaysian history. However, soon after, his anti-corruption drive slowed, to the disappointment of many. His public profile not only eroded, but was also quickly turned upside-down. Photographs depicting him appearing to be asleep during parliamentary sessions and other public functions led to 'the dubious honor of being labeled the "sleeping Prime Minister"' (Noor 2010, no page). These pictures soon flooded cyberspace and the opposition enthusiastically exploited them for anti-government campaigns. Subsequently, in the 2008 General Elections, Barisan Nasional suffered a surprising loss, with the Pakatan Rakyat opposition coalition winning five of 14 states (Kelantan, Kedah, Perak, Pinang, Selangor), a direct contrast to the single-state opposition victory (PAS' traditional stronghold Kelantan) in 2004.<sup>36</sup> Ironically, Badawi 'both won and lost the greatest mandatory majority ever' for BN 'in the elections of 2004 and 2008' (Warnk 2010: 121). Within UMNO, criticism against Badawi's 'weak leadership' became louder, and in May 2008 Mahathir—who during most of Badawi's tenure had publicly criticized him—even declared that he would leave the party until Badawi resigned. In July 2008, Badawi gave in to pressure and announced that he would resign, after a planned one-year period to prepare a smooth transition that would last until June 2009. In April 2009, he finally handed over his posts as prime minister and UMNO president to Najib Tun Razak. Today, many 'average' Malaysians claim in retrospect that Badawi, who remains popularly known by his nickname Pak Lah (Uncle Lah), was a 'weak' leader, as opposed to the 'strong' Mahathir Mohamad; while Mahathir was criticized for his 'iron fist', ironically Badawi was faulted for his lack of it.

### ***Islam Hadhari, Islamic State, or both?***

Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's heritage in terms of anti-corruption efforts remains disputed, and his once widely discussed 'new' political approach to Islam has also proven to be short-lived. During the victorious election of 2004, Badawi even made significant inroads in the PAS heartland, Kelantan, and was able to take over the previously PAS-controlled state of Terengganu following a campaign in which he portrayed himself as a 'moderate' bulwark against PAS' 'Taliban-like' Islamist fundamentalism. Before the elections,

PAS had conducted its heated election campaign for the establishment of an Islamic State (*Daulah Islamiyyah/Negara Islam*). In addition, PAS had even initially declared its—later withdrawn—support for the Afghan Taliban, with slogans at PAS demonstrations reading ‘Taliban are our brothers’ (Noor 2009, no page), in reaction to the U.S.-led ‘war on terror’. However, PAS’ stance proved to be rather unpopular in the larger local public, and UMNO made use of it by showing clips on television that portrayed PAS as a medieval group of extremists (Abdul Hamid 2009a: 152; Noor 2002: 165–70, 2004b: 667–82). In contrast, Badawi offered an alternative concept which he labeled as *Islam Hadhari* (or ‘civilizational Islam’). Several—rather vague—characteristics were defined as *Islam Hadhari*’s essence. These included faith and piety in Allah, just and trustworthy government, freedom and independence to the people, mastery of knowledge, balanced and comprehensive economic development, good quality of life for all, protection of the (not clearly specified) rights of minority groups and women, cultural and moral integrity, protection of the environment and a strong defense policy (cf. Chong 2006: 26 ff.; Warnk 2010: 116–20). In what must be understood against the backdrop of the ‘Islamization race’, PAS did its best to position itself against Badawi’s *Islam Hadhari* approach, trying to prove its flawed nature as opposed to the ‘true’ Islamic teachings that required a ‘full’ implementation of—what PAS understands to be—Islamic Law.

Together with Badawi, the concept of *Islam Hadhari* disappeared from the political scene, with only two traces remaining, an Islam Hadhari Institute at the National University of Malaysia (Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, UKM)<sup>37</sup> and an *Islam Hadhari* ‘think tank’ (the International Institute of Advanced Islamic Studies, IAIS) which was founded in 2007 with Badawi as its patron. The government’s *Islam Hadhari* website was closed in November 2009 and with it most of its idea, and especially the term, were buried. Conversely, UMNO’s nemesis PAS has never abandoned its principle goal of a ‘completely’ implemented Islamic State (see Chapter 3). Since 2009, the PAS Youth leadership has been particularly reluctant to compromise or to be overly patient vis-à-vis this goal. Accordingly, they are highly critical of senior liberal PAS politicians (most notably Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad, Khalid Samad, Dr Hatta Ramli, Dr Mujahid Yusof Rawa and Husam Musa) who opt for realpolitik and a tactical postponement of establishing an all-encompassing Islamic legal and state order. Some observers misunderstand PAS’ relative public silence on the term ‘Islamic State’ since the elections of 2004, despite the fact that since 2009 the PAS Youth Wing has invested a great deal of energy, both openly and behind the scenes, to once more make an Islamic State a more central and visible issue. Furthermore, a closer look reveals that behind the scenes, the Islamic State has always remained a fundamental belief, one that it is an absolute religious duty (*wajib*) and core principle (*asas*), and accordingly it is necessary to establish it under any name. This superior goal remains a regular topic in PAS’ *usrah* study sessions (see Chapter 4), publications, and indeed even in the party’s official hymn.<sup>38</sup> Challenging those who believe that a ‘post-Islamist’ PAS would

have ‘abandoned’ the goal of an Islamic State, the PAS Youth’s Institute for Policy Studies (IPS), for example, organized an event entitled: ‘Who Needs an Explanation about the Islamic State?’ (*Siapa Memerlukan Penjelasan Tentang Negara Islam?*) in December 2010. The speakers included, among others: then senior PAS Vice-President Nasharudin Mat Isa, who presented ‘The Struggle to Build an Islamic State in Malaysia’ (*Perjuangan Mendirikan Negara Islam di Malaysia: Matlamat dan Cabaran*); and the current (2009–) PAS Youth chief Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi, who lectured on ‘The Duty of the *Ummah* to Build an Islamic State’ (*Kewajipan Ummah Mendirikan Negara Islam*). Top leaders of both youth and senior PAS stood side-by-side in an attempt to reinstate the Islamic State, directly illustrating the topic’s importance in the PAS dogmatists’ vision for Malaysia.

Despite the fact that an Islamic State would, as their youth leader Anthony Loke Siew Fook told me in no uncertain terms (Interview with DAP Socialist Youth leader Anthony Loke Siew Fook, Seremban, 3 March 2010), be the ‘red line’ for PAS’ coalition partner DAP, PAS has not ideologically abandoned the concept. Conversely, over the course of the last ten years, PAS’ ‘enemy’ UMNO has developed a different stance. In 2007 Badawi stated that Malaysia was already an ‘Islamic State’ (of the *Islam Hadhari* brand), thereby repeating similar claims by Mahathir made in September 2001 and 2002 (*Malaysiakini*, 27 August 2007; see also Liow 2009: 107–9, 140 ff.; Peletz 2011: 140). While renowned academics (Liow 2009: 177 and Noor 2006) agree with his statement and argue ‘that the key debates among Malay political and religious elites at present concern not whether Malaysia is or should become an Islamic state, but rather what kind of Islamic state it *already* is’ (Peletz 2011: 141), not surprisingly, PAS disagrees and continues to call for the implementation of a ‘real’ Islamic State, dismissing *Islam Hadhari* as an ‘illegitimate innovation’ (*bid’ah*) (Abdul Hadi Awang 2005, quoted in Liow 2009: 69). Another legacy of Badawi’s tenure is a further strengthening of the increasingly large and powerful governmental Islamic bureaucracy, which led to a situation in which sections have, at times, been even beyond UMNO’s political control.

According to Farish Noor (2010, no page), Abdullah Ahmad Badawi ‘was caught in a dilemma that was not of his own making’, trying to appear more inclusivist than his predecessor Mahathir, while at the same time his own party expected that he should safeguard ‘Malay interests’. In the end, Badawi was unable to seriously challenge or change Malaysia’s ‘institutionalized and normalized culture of communitarian politics’ (Noor 2010: no page). His successor, the acting prime minister Najib Tun Razak, faces the same dilemma, and has attempted to solve it with a new approach—the inclusivist slogan *1Malaysia*.

### Najib Tun Razak: ‘One Malaysia’?

When Najib Tun Razak became prime minister on 3 April 2009, his public image was anything but spotless. In the past, the opposition had accused him

of receiving large illegal commissions for a multi-million-dollar submarine deal in France during his time as minister of defense (1991–2009). Furthermore, there was—and continues to be—widespread conviction that he was involved in the murder of a Mongolian woman, Altanuya Shaariibuugiin, whose body was mutilated by C-4 explosives on 18 October 2006 in Shah Alam, near Kuala Lumpur. Born in 1978, the Mongolian national Altanuya had reportedly worked as a translator for Najib's close aide Abdul Razak Baginda during arms trade negotiations in France. Two Special Action Force (Unit Tindakan Khas, UTK) officers from Najib's personal bodyguard staff were sentenced to death, despite the fact that no motive was ever made public, while the defense analyst Abdul Razak Baginda, was also detained but released soon afterwards. Among opposition supporters several conspiracy theories circulate regarding Najib's alleged involvement in the case, all claiming different motives and details that center on claims that Altanuya had accompanied Abdul Razak Baginda (and 'possibly Najib Tun Razak') at an arms deal in France, where a high amount of commissions was paid to Malaysian government representatives. The dominant conspiracy theoretical narrative outlines that she blackmailed either Najib Tun Razak, Abdul Razak Baginda, or both, for a share in these commissions, which led to her murder. It is impossible to verify or falsify the various claims. However, given the amount of influence high-ranking UMNO politicians are perceived to have on Malaysian courts and the restrictions on free journalistic work or public discourse pertaining to the case, widespread suspicion remains.<sup>39</sup> Najib, for his part, has repeatedly denied having ever met with the murder victim.

Despite such a challenging inauguration as prime minister in 2009, Najib was much more successful than many would have expected. He proclaimed the target of *1Malaysia* to be his utmost political goal, the attempt to unify the different races as one Malaysian people in which a harmonious sense of being Malaysian was superior to racial sentiment.<sup>40</sup> Notwithstanding accusations that arose with regard to statements he reportedly made in the 1980s that indicated that he, as an UMNO Youth politician, threatened to bathe the Malay dagger (*keris*) in 'Chinese blood' if necessary (*Malaysiakini*, 9 May 2008), Najib managed to achieve an increasing degree of credibility as a representative of the *1Malaysia* program. In several by-elections, the opposition lost ground, whereas the UMNO leadership became more and more confident that after BN's relatively bad performance in the General Election of 2008, the government had regained popularity.

In March 2010, Najib announced the New Economic Model (NEM) and Government Transformation Programme (GTP) (*The Star*, 30 March 2010), national development initiatives which were lauded by many foreign observers and even opposition leaders.<sup>41</sup> The new plans included the target to double the average per capita income to RM 49,500 (ca. 11,450 Euro) by 2020, sustainably empower the private sector, reduce fiscal disparities between rich and poor, and even shift affirmative action—to some extent—away from racial aspects to a needs-based approach. While the Pakatan Rakyat

opposition agreed with the goals despite questioning the government's sincerity behind the plans, Malay racist hardliners saw an increased need to protect the Malays. The UMNO-owned newspaper *Utusan* suggested starting a *1 Bumi, 1 Melayu* (One Bumiputera, One Malay) counter-campaign (*The Malaysian Insider*, 20 April 2011), and the right-wing ethno-nationalist newspaper *Era Baru* (19 March 2010) even asked why 'UMNO no longer fights for the Malay race?' (*UMNO tak lagi berjuang Bangsa Melayu?*)

Similar accusations were made by newly emerging far-right ethno-nationalist Malay NGOs, such as Pertubuhan Pribumi Perkasa Malaysia (PERKASA) which is led by the radical racist Ibrahim Ali.<sup>42</sup> Founded in 2008, PERKASA repeatedly threatened both the opposition and the government over matters regarding 'Malay rights', with little action being taken by the authorities in response.<sup>43</sup> Even when Ibrahim Ali threatened with a 'crusade against ungrateful Christians' after Christian groups had, in a rare case, publicly protested against discrimination, high-ranking government officials refused to take action against PERKASA (*Malaysiakini*, 19 May 2011). The comparatively very liberal UMNO Youth Chief Khairy Jamaluddin stated that he faced strong opposition within his own party for not supporting PERKASA (*Malaysiakini*, 23 May 2011), which reflects the UMNO grassroots' tendency to either secretly or openly agree with PERKASA's aggressive racist positions. Some have suspected that PERKASA was covertly formed by UMNO to strategically 'outsource' the delicate Malay Supremacy agenda (*Malaysiakini*, 4 March 2010), in what could be regarded a 'good cop, bad cop strategy'. However, my own sources suggest that PERKASA is its own entity that is largely independent from UMNO, although UMNO may at times have taken advantage of it.

On many issues the majority of the UMNO mainstream and PERKASA hold comparable positions and even organize common demonstrations (see, for example, *Malaysiakini*, 20 May 2011), while UMNO remains trapped in the communitarian perspective that a racially defined party cannot escape. When a Malaysian court uplifted a ban on the word 'Allah' to describe the Christian God in *Bahasa Melayu* (U.S. Department of State 2010: no page), UMNO protested alongside numerous NGOs, including PERKASA, who argued that the Christian usage of the word 'Allah' could 'confuse the beliefs of Muslims' (*The Malaysian Insider*, 5 January 2010). Despite his *1 Malaysia* slogan, Najib initially encouraged these protests, declaring that if Muslims wanted to stage demonstrations against the court decision he was not able to hinder them (*The Malaysian Insider*, 7 January 2010), in a country where public political gatherings require permission that is usually not granted. The situation went out of control, when several church buildings were demolished. Despite UMNO's and Najib's sharp condemnation of these attacks, critics have blamed the government for heating up the atmosphere that had led to this escalation. In contrast, PAS neither protested against the court decision nor encouraged people to stage demonstrations. Instead, while fully aware that its action would likely cost some Malay votes, the party provided

theological justifications that Christians could indeed call God Allah, although there were dissenting voices within PAS, who despite their disagreement loyally respected the party's official stance.<sup>44</sup> Many non-Muslims had the impression that after three decades of the 'Islamization race', UMNO has become 'more radical' than PAS (or 'more PAS than PAS', see Liow 2007: 178), whereas the Islamist PAS would protect the rights of non-Muslims more than the very same government which claimed that *1Malaysia* was its ultimate principle.

Under Najib, moral policing and an orthodox, anti-pluralist and intolerant government approach to Islam has remained an everyday reality, with hotel raids and arrests of non-married Muslim couples for *khalwat* ('close proximity' between non-married couples), forced detentions in religious 'rehabilitation' centers, and close monitoring of Muslims adhering to so-called 'deviant teachings' (*ajaran sesat*) (compare U.S. Department of State 2010, no page). Currently, 56 'sects' who regard themselves as Muslims are banned because they are 'deviant' in Malaysia (U.S. Department of State 2010, no page). For example, two hundred Shi'ite Muslims belonging to a Khomeinist center called Hauzah Ar-Ridha Alaihissalam were arrested near Kuala Lumpur for propagating their faith in 2011 (*Malaysia Digest*, 17 December 2010),<sup>45</sup> and the Ahmadiyah-Qadiani sect was banned from calling itself Muslim (with a signboard at their main mosque stating that they are 'not Muslims' (*Qadiani Bukan Agama Islam*), and a ban on conducting Friday prayers there). Hindus, Buddhists and Christians are also not enjoying equal religious rights; for instance, they are not allowed to promote their religion to Muslims and are themselves regularly 'educated' about the truth of Islam and mistakenness of their own beliefs, often encouraged or organized by government bodies. Both the government and parts of the opposition remain caught in ethnic, religious, organizational and otherwise communitarian thinking, and newly founded groups such as PERKASA or the Hindu Rights Action Force (HINDRAF) continue to be radically race-obsessed. The road toward *1Malaysia*, it seems, remains a far distant goal. Najib's approach of categorically rejecting religious pluralism (*New Straits Times*, 9 November 2012) and denying the individual human right to unconditional equality before the law in the fields of ethnicity and religion perpetuates feelings of alienation among significant parts of the population. It remains to be seen whether the majority of Malaysians will continue to support such policies.

### **Shadows of the past—the political atmosphere today**

Even though the application of the ISA against opposition politicians has relatively declined and was finally repealed in 2012 (The Malaysian Bar 2012, no page), many elements of Mahathir's iron fist approach are still intact. This includes the political use of the police and the Special Branch (SB) to monitor and disrupt the opposition, with a condition whereby omnipresent human and technical intelligence in opposition circles is no secret.<sup>46</sup> In an environment

where the same party has led the government for more than 50 years, it is not surprising that state institutions remain under its firm political control. Newspapers are required to annually apply for license renewal under the Printing Presses and Publications Act 1984, further compounded by normalized fears of losing the license or being charged for 'sedition' when critically reporting about governmental policies or persons. The Ministry of Home Affairs can revoke or suspend the license if the publication is found 'to be prejudicial to public order, morality, security' or 'national interest' (Teoh 2007, no page). If the Ministry rejects the renewal of a license, it is not possible to legally challenge the decision. While major newspapers (such as *Utusan*, *New Straits Times* and *The Star*) are still either directly or indirectly owned and controlled by government parties (most notably UMNO and MCA), the few opposition newspapers like PAS' *Harakah* face far-reaching restrictions, such as only being allowed to be circulated among party members. The loss of a license is a legitimate fear; both *Harakah* and PKR's *Suara Keadilan* have repeatedly lost even their restricted licenses for shorter periods in the last years. Similarly, Malaysian television news continues to be blatantly pro-government without exception. It is therefore not surprising that in 2008 Malaysia was ranked number 173 in an international press freedom ranking made by Reporters sans Frontières (*Malaysiakini*, 22 October 2008). The atmosphere of censorship and self-censorship corresponds to a general discursive atmosphere, where many questions are considered to be 'too sensitive', especially if they are related to race, religion or governmental politics and politicians. In such a discursive setting, free 'public reasoning' remains limited to tightly defined boundaries. Furthermore, many Malays believe that non-Muslims should not be allowed to engage in political debates about Islam. As Islam has become an integral part of the state, non-Muslim citizens are largely excluded from participating in a significant part of Malaysian state politics. Muslims themselves are also often regarded to be unqualified to comment on questions pertaining to Islam, as only properly educated Islamic scholars (*ulamalagamawan*) should have this exclusive right (see Chapter 3). In 2002, several academics and public intellectuals, including Patricia Martinez, Farish Noor, Haris Ibrahim, Malik Imtiaz, Zainah Anwar, Akbar Ali and Kassim Ahmad, were accused of blasphemy (Lemière 2010b: 55–56) by the Malaysian Ulama Union (Persatuan Ulama Malaysia, PUM) (*Malaysiakini*, 8 February 2002). Although they were finally not prosecuted, in other cases serious punishments were imposed on those Muslim 'heretics'. In 2009, Abdul Kahar Ahmad, a Malay who claimed to be a prophet and questioned the necessity of *hajj* (pilgrimage to Mecca), was sentenced to ten years in jail, six lashes, and a fine of 16,500 RM (4,000 Euro) by the Syariah High Court, based on the Syariah Criminal Enactment 1995 (Lemière 2010b: 55–56). Additionally, he was sentenced to spend the last six months of his jail term at a religious 'rehabilitation' center (Pusat Pemurnian Akidah Baitul Iman). Obviously, it has become increasingly dangerous for Muslims to utter alternative viewpoints about Islam-related matters. In addition to the accusations



of blasphemy, some of these intellectuals also received death threats. The discursive space on Islam-related questions, which is the most central field of activity for PAS, has effectively been narrowed to a clearly marked form of Sunni orthodoxy, while, for example, a small group of PAS members who secretly follow Shi'ite Islam is cautious not to propagate their 'deviant' beliefs in their own party, let alone in public (see Chapter 3).

### **Future prospects for PAS and Pakatan Rakyat**

The image of Malaysia's only trans-ethnically widely popular opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim has been seriously damaged. In the weeks before 16 September 2008, he loudly proclaimed that on 16 September Pakatan Rakyat would take over the government, as he already had the sufficient number of BN parliamentarians who were willing to cross the floor in Parliament to ensure that this could happen. However, to the irritation of many, no takeover took place. The court case pertaining to renewed allegations of sodomy has further smeared his image, as did a sex tape that was leaked in March 2011 by one PERKASA and two UMNO members that allegedly showed Anwar having sex with a (female) prostitute.<sup>47</sup> Even though UMNO politicians were suspiciously involved in both cases, and his guilt has ever been proven, people increasingly believe 'something' could be true about these numerous allegations against Anwar's moral integrity. On Malaysian state television, recorded phone calls resembling Anwar Ibrahim's voice were aired, with the purpose of 'proving' that he has numerous extramarital affairs with young men and women. Even a prominent PAS politician admitted in a private conversation with me that he had strong doubts. Also beyond such sex allegations, Anwar has developed the image of a political chameleon even among some of his former supporters, telling different target audiences different things—emphasizing Islamist credentials for PAS supporters, more socialist values for the DAP, and portraying himself as the safeguard of religious pluralism for Western audiences. Therefore, PAS' Secretary General, Dato' Mustafa Ali (himself a victim of a suspicious 'sex video' distributed by UMNO bloggers prior to the General Elections of 2013), criticized PKR during a closed meeting with academics in Singapore in 2009 for 'not having an ideology'. Many (former) supporters of Anwar are increasingly disillusioned and question his capability to lead a government, and even such hardline anti-BN activists like the country's most famous (and exiled) blogger Raja Petra Kamaruddin have lost faith in him (*The Malaysian Insider*, 14 April 2011). Aside from Anwar, his party lacks comparable leader figures. His wife, Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, who had led the party during his time in jail and formally continues to do so, has largely disappeared from the visible stage. His daughter, the PKR Deputy President Nurul Izzah (who, like her father, also became victim of a fabricated 'sex video' in 2013), is popular among urban, liberal-minded constituencies, but lacks the status of a widely popular opposition figure and faces power struggles within PKR itself (Zalkapli 2010a: no page). Two other former

PKR key members, the 'moderate' Zaid Ibrahim and the controversial ethno-religious hardliner, Zulkifli Noordin, left the party in 2010, at the same time as several other mid-ranking functionaries (Zalkapli 2010b: no page). In PKR's Youth Wing (Angkatan Muda Keadilan, AMK), leadership rivalries caused an emotional rift at the party's General Assembly in 2010, with allegations of voting irregularities being uttered by the defeated candidate, Badrul Hisham Shahrin (popular nickname *Chegubard*) (*New Straits Times*, 11 November 2010; *The Star*, 19 December 2010). The fact that Badrul Hisham is married to Anwar Ibrahim's niece further fuels perceptions that Anwar, like some of his counterparts in UMNO, is trying to build up a family dynasty within 'his' party.

A serious problem for PKR's coalition partners, PAS and DAP, is their de facto incompatibility when it comes to fundamental questions about political visions for a future Malaysia. While PAS envisions an Islamic order, ideally based on Islamic supremacy and 'fully' governed under a 'truly' Islamic government and legal system, DAP insists that Malaysia should ideally be a secular state, based on the legal equality of all citizens irrespective of religion and race.<sup>48</sup> While most senior PAS *ulama*, and the PAS Youth leadership as well, continue to demand the 'full' implementation of Islamic Criminal Law (*hudud/qisas*) and *syariat Islam* as the sole legal system for Muslims (and 'optional' for non-Muslims), DAP categorically rejects this vision that is fundamentally constitutive for PAS' identity. Furthermore, for DAP leaders gender justice means unconditional gender equality (interview with DAP Socialist Youth, Anthony Loke Siew Fook, Seremban, 3 March 2010), while PAS argues that gender justice does *precisely not* mean equality. Instead, as several PAS members have univocally assured me, PAS argues that every sex should be in the place that God has prescribed, with their roles, duties and legal status *unequal* in several aspects, for example, in heritage law, or in terms of everyday life, family gender roles and related behavioral norms. Umar\*, a PAS Youth activist, explained the Islamic understanding of gender justice, as claimed by PAS, as follows: 'In a human body, an arm has to be where the arm belongs, and a leg needs to be where the leg belongs. Everything has its correct place, as prescribed by God. Islamic justice does not mean equality' (informal conversation with Umar\*, Petaling Jaya, June 2010). Put differently, a status of 'justice' in PAS discourse would be the complete implementation of Syariah law.

Additionally, many PAS Youth members are unhappy with what they perceive as PAS' role as second fiddle to Anwar and its forced loyalty to him. The only thing that the PR coalition fully agrees upon is its opposition to the BN government, its rejection of corruption and the aspiration to come into power. Its common manifesto (*Dasar Pakatan Rakyat*) from December 2009 appears vague when it comes to the details of how the implementation of goals like 'social justice' would look like in reality, particularly whether it represents the PAS brand of Islamist justice or the DAP version of a secular and socialist 'justice'. Similarly, many people doubt that the opposition has the practical competency to govern the country—a problem that the PAS

Youth leadership is well aware of and tries to counter through respective training programs under the PAS Youth Leadership Academy (Akademi Kepimpinan Muda Pemuda PAS, AKP), a body that conducts training programs for PAS Youth members in management and leadership skills.<sup>49</sup>

In the meantime UMNO continues to professionally conduct well-timed and effective attacks against the opposition at its weakest points, while it also attracts sufficient numbers of undecided voters whenever necessary, be it through the—previously announced—allocation of funds only to constituencies where BN holds the majority or through direct financial ‘donations’ to individual voters. Even though some UMNO members (such as Tengku Razaleigh) criticize such ‘money politics’, and others even suspect that their prime minister was ‘involved in a murder case’, they continue to support UMNO for various reasons, including trust in UMNO’s competency in economic matters (or ‘keeping promises’), the lack of convincing alternatives, traditional political belonging, belief in race-obsessed ideologies, or due to personal material considerations. PAS and Pakatan Rakyat loudly cry foul over the ‘dirty tactics’ of the ‘*UMNO-Putera*’ (‘sons of UMNO’, as opposed to *bumiputera*, ‘sons of the soil’), yet PAS has also at times paid voters, justified as ‘Islamic welfare’ or ‘alms’ (see, for example, *Malaysiakini*, 3 November 2010). However, UMNO’s practice of ‘buying support’ through various means is a far more widespread and systematic phenomenon. In any case, it is clear that among significant parts of the population, UMNO/BN remains highly popular. Many BN supporters fear the opposition more than they are worried about possible shortcomings of BN’s ‘strong’ leadership. Within the BN government, the material benefits of being in power and a lack of alternatives will keep UMNO’s main coalition partners MCA and MIC closely in line. This, however, seems to weaken the latter considerably. In the General Election of 2013, especially the MCA suffered a dramatic loss, leading to a historic situation in which it is not even represented in the cabinet anymore. It remains to be seen whether UMNO/BN will succeed in restoring its non-Malay support base, especially among the ethnic Chinese population.

Despite its numerous weaknesses, Pakatan Rakyat does control several states and PAS has a firm support base, not only in the PAS state of Kelantan and the Malay Belt along Terengganu, Kedah and Perlis, but also in many parts of the key state Selangor, in Perak, in Pahang, and even in urban Kuala Lumpur. Especially since the *reformasi* movement of the late 1990s, when significant parts of the new Malay middle class ‘dramatically’ (Embong 2001: 97) turned away from UMNO/BN, PAS has witnessed a previously unseen influx of large numbers of young university graduates and professionals who often do not come from PAS-supporting families. These new actors, who differ from PAS’ previous either ‘rural Malay’ or ‘conservative *ulama*’ image, transformed the party’s appearance and introduced innovative strategies. Many people outside of PAS’ community hope that particularly these new actors would push forward the cooperation within Pakatan Rakyat, and finally bring the ‘eternal rule’ of UMNO to an end.

## The PAS Youth and Pakatan Rakyat

In order to locate the role and contribution of the PAS Youth in the larger constellation of Malaysian opposition politics, this section will briefly elaborate on the PAS Youth's interaction with the youth wings of its Pakatan Rakyat partners, the DAP and PKR, in the post-*reformasi* era.

In the late 1990s, the PAS Youth, which proudly conceptualizes itself as the party's 'first wing' (*sayap utama*) or 'pressure group' (*pendesak*) and has pioneered many pathbreaking innovations and political re-orientations throughout its history, was at the forefront of the *reformasi* movement. Under the leadership of Mahfuz Omar (1999–2003), the PAS Youth had actively pushed forward the project of a multi-religious, multi-ethnic and multi-ideological opposition coalition—the Barisan Alternatif. Within PAS, the progressive approach of the young reformists met resistance particularly among senior conservative religious scholars (*ulama*). More recently, however, the PAS Youth, now led by the Al-Azhar graduate Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi (2009–), has shifted direction. In contrast to its pioneering role in the past, the new PAS Youth leadership has repeatedly been perceived as a hindrance for Pakatan Rakyat's progress by its own coalition partners. Instead of forging compromise-oriented coalition politics, the PAS Youth became increasingly concerned with a reactionary mission to safeguard the 'basis of the Islamic struggle' (*asas/dasar perjuangan Islam*). This shift was followed by a number of emotional controversies, in which the youth wings of DAP and PKR openly disagreed with the PAS Youth over matters relating to the latter's dogmatic Islamist orientation.

The DAP Socialist Youth (DAPSY) protested in 2011, for example, against 'the approach taken by PAS Youth to act as 'moral police' to check on couples on Valentine's Day' (DAPSY 2011, no page). The DAPSY leadership also sharply criticized that the PAS Youth had 'never discussed' its moral policing campaigns with its Youth Wing partners in Pakatan Rakyat, or at one of the regular Pakatan Rakyat Leadership Council meetings. DAPSY Chief Anthony Loke declared in no uncertain terms that the:

PAS Youth must realize that Pakatan Rakyat is a coalition of three political parties. ... Any action at the state government level must be agreed upon by the coalition ... Unilateral actions or policy announcements by any component party will be tantamount in jeopardizing Pakatan Rakyat's collective interest.

(DAPSY 2011: no page)

Another source of conflict are the PAS Youth's public protests against concerts of Western musicians in Malaysia (see Chapter 4). When the PAS Youth called for a ban on a concert of the homosexual singer Elton John in 2012, for example, the DAPSY Chief expressed his anger over the PAS Youth's paternalistic and coalition-harming attitude:

DAPSY wishes to state our strong disagreement with PAS Youth for their attempt to seek the authority to ban Elton John's concert ... While we respect their freedom of opinion, DAPSY feels that taking such a step will only give fodder to Barisan Nasional ... to continue to paint a negative picture on PAS Youth as a backward and regressive youth movement. This will surely not help Pakatan Rakyat to convince Malaysians that we are a progressive and moderate coalition ... PAS Youth's reason that allowing Elton John to perform in Malaysia will lead to the rise of homosexuality and other social ills due to his sexual orientation is both simplistic and unacceptable.

(Anthony Loke Siew Fook quoted in DAP Penang 2012: no page)

DAPSY and the main DAP party have also frequently spoken out against PAS' belief in a religious duty to implement Islamic penal code, particularly *hudud*. In contrast to the senior PAS reformists, the PAS Youth under Ustaz Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi is constantly speaking on the urgent need to implement *hudud* (including, for example, the death penalty for adultery: stoning, etc.; see, for example, PAS Youth Homepage 2010a; Tantawi 2011a). When the DAP leader Karpal Singh once again criticized this, the PAS Youth Chief replied via Twitter that Karpal Singh was 'consistent in rejecting hudud because he is a non-believer. PAS must continue with its struggle to uphold Islam' (quoted in *New Straits Times*, 30 July 2012). The PAS Youth Chief of Terengganu, Ustaz Mohd Nor Hamzah, added that Karpal should 'quit politics' as his objection against *hudud* was 'outdated'. This provoked massive protests not only from DAPSY (*New Straits Times*, 4 August 2012), but also from PKR's Youth Wing, the AMK (Angkatan Muda Keadilan) (*New Straits Times*, 25 July 2012). The PAS Youth Chief, on the other hand, repeatedly reaffirmed that 'one's intention to implement God's laws' is 'a sign of faith in oneself', whereas 'those who reject God's laws reflect their disbelief' (*New Straits Times*, 30 July 2012). Good Muslims would never compromise on this matter, he added, and called on his followers via social media: 'Search for Allah's blessing, although millions oppose' (*New Straits Times*, 30 July 2012).

During another controversy between the Pakatan Rakyat youth wings, related to the question whether or not non-Muslims should be allowed to use the word 'Allah', the PAS Youth Chief suggested that the DAP consult 'the ulama first' (*Malaysia Digest*, 24 December 2012). This perfectly reflects the PAS Youth leadership's understanding of coalition politics, which is *not* based on inter-religious equality or, as proponents of the post-Islamism hypothesis might assume, 'rights instead of duties, (and) plurality in place of a singular authoritative voice' (Bayat 2007: 10–11), let alone 'global discourses on freedom and pluralist societies' (Boubekeur and Roy 2012: 13). Most PAS Youth members insist that, with its self-perceived responsibility for safeguarding God's legislation, PAS must be 'the dominant force' of the coalition, and its *ulama* must ensure that PAS' 'Islamic coalition politics' (*tahaluf siyasi*) are conducted in full accordance with Islamic Law. In the words of a PAS

Youth member, '(i)f Ulamas do not lead us, we are worried that the basic principle of PAS will be shaken' (*Malaysiakini*, 16 November 2012). From the PAS Youth's mainstream perspective, the coalition does not imply a deliberative process of open-ended will-formation on eye-level, but is only worth participating in if it serves as an effective vehicle to realize the 'Islamic struggle', as defined by the PAS *ulama*, and to 'educate' the coalition partners about 'true Islam'.

Given the at times fierce disagreements between the PAS Youth and its coalition partners, many opposition supporters wonder whether a future Pakatan Rakyat government would represent the PAS Youth's line, the contrasting reformist orientation of some senior PAS politicians, or even the liberal and secularist positions of DAP. Others argue that the Muslim parties PAS and UMNO, with their claims of Syariah-based Islamic politics, have much more in common than PAS and DAP. The UMNO Youth has indeed repeatedly invited the PAS Youth to participate in its own 'Islamic' political activities, such as a protest rally against the anti-Islamic movie *Innocence of Muslims*, anti-Valentine's Day protests, Palestine-solidarity events and anti-Israeli demonstrations (*Free Malaysia Today*, 20 September 2012; UMNO-Online 2012). The PAS Youth has rejected most invitations, but the irony remains that emically speaking, PAS' enemy UMNO consists of 'brothers' who claim to share many foundational normative convictions, whereas the DAP stands outside this imagined kinship community. Although regarded as (more or less) friendly non-believers (*kafir/kuffar dhimmi*), the latter are imagined to be condemned to hellfire. The UMNO Youth, in turn, regularly highlights that PAS had to overly 'compromise' on Islamic positions in Pakatan Rakyat, whereas UMNO's actual governance was 'more Islamic' than PAS (*The Malay Mail*, 17 April 2013; *Free Malaysia Today*, 30 November 2012).

To be sure, there are some senior PAS leaders who are worried about the PAS Youth's apparent political priorities. The prominent PAS leader Datuk Hassan Kadir\*, for example, half-jokingly spoke of his 'fear' that if PAS allocated parliamentary seats to certain PAS Youth leaders, the party might end up discussing Valentine's Day and the need to ban supposedly un-Islamic ghost movies in Parliament, instead of addressing much more urgent political and social matters.

In PAS' history, the Youth Wing traditionally plays the role of an agent of change that forces the main party to question and where necessary, renegotiate the parameters of its political engagement (see Chapter 3). In the last few years, however, the PAS Youth has to a certain extent become a bastion of neo-conservatism within PAS. It urges the senior party to return to the 'pure' path, calls for a revived emphasis on the establishment of an Islamic State and God-made legal order, and backs a strict *ulama* rule, based on a 'top-down, authoritarian system of knowledge transmission' (Roy 2012: 8)—characteristics that the proponents of the post-Islamism hypothesis claim to be disappearing among the young generation. At the same time, however, the PAS Youth Wing is currently not simply a force of continuity or restoration of

classical Islamist politics. It is in many aspects a highly creative agent of change and organizational innovation, as we shall further explore in the following chapters of this monograph.

## Notes

- 1 Comber (2008: 5) provides historic data which suggest that in Peninsular Malaya (excluding the Chinese-dominated Straits Settlements of Singapore, Penang and Malacca) there were 63.9 percent Malays in 1883, 54 percent in 1921, 49.2 percent in 1931, 49.5 percent in 1947, 49.8 percent in 1957, 50.1 percent in 1965, and in 1970 there were 53.2 percent Malays. This not only illustrates that this majority has always been slight, but also demonstrates that during the late colonial period the influx of Indian and Chinese workers at the hands of the British colonial administration temporarily brought the number of Malays below 50 percent, a loss of absolute majority from which they recovered by 1965. From then on, the demographic share of Malays always remained slightly higher than the symbolic mark of 50 percent, but it is still close enough to fuel fears about once again becoming 'a minority in their own country' (Comber 2008: 5).
- 2 According to the same source (Department of Statistics Malaysia 2011), 19.8 percent of the population are Buddhists, 9.2 percent Christians, 6.3 percent Hindus, and 1.3 percent adhere to Confucianism, Taoism and other traditional Chinese religions. 'Unknowns' are listed at 1 percent, 0.4 as 'other religions' and 0.7 as 'no religion'.
- 3 Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (1752–1840) was one of the first persons to speak of a 'Malay race', implying that human races were natural entities comparable to the classification of different types of plants and animals. He suggested differentiating human beings in five natural races: Caucasian, Ethiopian, American, Mongolian and Malay (see Bhopal 2007: 1308). More formative for the early colonial discourse on Malay ethnicity, however, was Raffles' (1818) influential essay *On the Malayu Nation, with a Translation of Its Maritime Institution* (compare also Shamsul 2004: 112).
- 4 British Malaya came into being in 1786, when the British East India Company, with permission of the Sultan of Kedah, established trade posts in Georgetown, Penang. It was further enlarged during the nineteenth century and its regime remained in power until 1946, when the Malayan Union (1946–57) was founded. The Federation of Malaya existed from 1948 to 1963. Malaysia came into being as an independent state in 1957 and in 1963 was enlarged by the integration of territories in North Borneo and Singapore, with the latter becoming independent from Malaysia in 1965.
- 5 According to Lily Zubaidah Rahim (1998: 27), in contrast to Malaysia, 2 percent of the Malay community in Singapore were officially non-Muslims in 1980. The Singapore Bataks are 'an example of a community that prefers to be identified as Malay despite their non-Islamic status' (Rahim 1998: 27; cf. Yusuf 1986: 56). Unlike in Malaysia, in Singapore all Indonesians are usually considered as Malays.
- 6 While UMNO is often seen as a 100 percent Malay–Muslim party, it would be more adequate to speak of a 100 percent *Bumiputera* party, as according to the U.S. Department of State (2010, no page), 'certain non-Muslims in Sabah' can be UMNO members as well. Lily Zubaidah Rahim (1998: 19), on the other hand, writes that since the mid-1990s all 'non-Muslim *Bumiputera* were authorized to become members of the party'.
- 7 The Alliance Party had already won a majority in the first election for the Federal Legislative Council in 1955 when Malaya was still a British protectorate. The party,

which was founded in 1951, subsequently paved the (largely non-violent) way toward independence. By 1957, it was officially registered as a political organization with the consent of the British administration.

- 8 Additionally, there are several smaller parties within the BN, which currently (as of June 2013) comprise Parti Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia (GERAK), People's Progressive Party, Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PPBB), Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP), Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS), Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), Parti Bersatu Rakyat Sabah, United Pasokmomogun Kadazandusun Murut Organisation (UPKO), Sarawak Progressive Democratic Party (SPDP), and Parti Rakyat Sarawak (PRS).
- 9 Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR) had initially consisted of two separate parties, the Justice Party (Keadilan) and the Malaysian People's Party (Parti Rakyat Malaysia, PRM) which merged to form PKR in 2003.
- 10 After the NOC was dissolved in 1971, the government created a National Security Council to deal with potential race conflicts and the perceived communist threat, against which secret and open warfare had been conducted by British and later Malay(sian) forces since the 1940s (see Comber 2008; Hack 1999; Jumper 2001; Stubbs 2004). In 1995, this Council was remodeled to create the National Security Division. In 2007, another transformation led to the establishment of what was called the National Security Council again.
- 11 Tun Abdul Razak is the father of the current Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak (from 2009).
- 12 The tensions were further fueled by Singapore's breakaway from the Federation of Malaya in 1965 after Singapore—which at that time still belonged to Malaysia—experienced its own 'race riots' in 1964. According to Rahim (1998: 16–17, 54, 62) the PAP (People's Action Party), which has governed Singapore ever since its independence, had been at the forefront of campaigning for a 'Malaysian Malaysia' and questioning the special status of Malays prior to Singapore's exit out of the Federation.
- 13 Beyond such normative ideals as expressed by PAS leaders, much of the party's emic mindset and lifeworld reality remains trapped along the 'racial' boundaries of Malay ethno-nationalism. Despite all normative claims on the leadership level, many PAS members still hold strong racial sentiments and perceive structural privileges of Malays as justified. Yet other PAS members do not truly share this position, but for tactical reasons occasionally try to play the 'Malay card' in order to win over Malay support. At the General Assembly in 2010, I observed PAS Youth members openly arguing for such an approach; this practice was also both acknowledged and criticized by the current PAS Youth leader (*Harakah Daily*, 15 March 2013).
- 14 However, emic voices within PAS would strongly deny that their approach is 'exclusivist', as, in their view, an Islamic order is the most just and inclusivist system on earth, just as UMNO, MIC or MCA members would deny their race-fixation to be an exclusivist hindrance to integrative national building. Nevertheless, etically it is hard to deny that restrictive rules about how to behave towards the culturally 'impure' non-Muslim Other and rejecting the latter's equal status before the law have an exclusivist and segregative component, similar to fundamentalist Christian attitudes toward pagans in other contexts.
- 15 While 'Islamist' student activists like Ibrahim Ali (who nowadays leads the right-wing ethno-nationalist Malay group PERKASA) had a deeply racist outlook and were much more 'concerned about isolating Malay-Muslims from the rest of the student body' (Noor 2005: 117), others were inspired by visions of de-racializing the Islamic politics. There were also other sources of fragmentation. For example: those exemplified by the split between the Islamist Malaysian student organization Islamic Representative Council (IRC) and PAS in the early 1980s, which was partly



due to the result of two conflicting views about how to implement the ideals of the Muslim Brotherhood in Malaysia, mirroring a split in the Muslim Brotherhood itself, between the globalist approach of *Ikhwan Al'lamin* and the localizationist approach of *Ikhwan Mahali* (interview with PAS Youth Central Committee member Mohd Taufiq\*, Kuala Lumpur, 22 January 2010). Finally, IRC-linked members who had 'infiltrated' the PAS Youth Central Committee were removed from PAS in 1987 and formed Jamaah Islah Malaysia (JIM) in 1990, which is one of the largest Islamist 'NGOs' in Malaysia today. For more details about the history of IRC, JIM and their relationship to PAS, see Abdul Hamid (2009a: 147–50).

- 16 Before leading ABIM, Anwar Ibrahim had been the chief of the Islamic student organization Persatuan Kebangsaan Pelajar Islam Malaysia (PKPIM) between 1968 and 1971. In 1971, ABIM was founded with Anwar acting as its first president. The ABIM continues to exist today, although its profile is no longer comparable to the period during Anwar Ibrahim's leadership (for the history of ABIM, see Abdul Hamid 2008).
- 17 In the course of his UMNO-career, Anwar was minister of agriculture, minister of education, and minister of finance.
- 18 Such ex-ISA detainees who are key opposition leaders today include Mohamad Sabu (PAS), Lim Guan Eng (DAP), Karpal Singh (DAP), Lim Kit Siang (DAP) and Anwar Ibrahim (PKR).
- 19 For a detailed account, see Noor (2004b: 398–403).
- 20 Ustaz Ibrahim 'Libya', also known as Ibrahim Mahmood, received his nickname 'Libya' because he had studied at the University of Tripoli in Libya (sometimes also spelled 'Libia'; Noor 2004b: 399). His fierce, uncompromisingly Islamist speeches are until today circulated among PAS Youth members, nowadays via Facebook and YouTube.
- 21 *Takfir* refers to a situation where Muslims accuse other Muslims of being non-believers (*kafir/kufar*) or religiously deviant hypocrites (*munafiq/munafiqeen*).
- 22 One PAS member, Mohamad Piah Yunus, was shot 14 times and survived. For a detailed description of this tragedy and the political circumstances, see Noor 2004b: 401 ff. For an account published by a contemporary PAS Youth activist, see Afghani and Nor (2010).
- 23 Other prominent government-critical detainees included the academic and human rights activist Chandra Muzaffar, civil rights activist Kua Kia Soong, woman rights activist Irene Xavier, and the Dong Jiao Zhong (Chinese Education Associations) chairman Lim Fong Seng. Although government party-related persons were also arrested, for instance, MCA Vice-President Chan Kit Chee as well as the ultra-radical Malay ethno-nationalist Ibrahim Ali (at the time UMNO, today PERKASA), most detainees belonged to the opposition or government-critical civil society, and also included a number of Christian evangelists (Noor 2004b: 423).
- 24 The Special Branch (Cawangan Khas) is a very influential and widely present Malaysian intelligence service, structurally operating under—and working closely together with—the Malaysian police (Polis Diraja Malaysia).
- 25 See also Drummond (1983: 308). Anwar Ibrahim was similarly attracted and made several visits to the Iranian government in the early 1980s (Abdul Hamid 2007: 452; Rubenstein 2002: x). He met Ayatollah Khomeini in 1979, and afterwards called—without success—for an 'Iranian Liberation and Solidarity Day' to be annually held in Malaysia (Noor 2004a: 334).
- 26 While the Arabic singular form of the plural term *ulama* (Islamic scholars) is '*alim*', in the appropriated Malay form, *ulama* is also a singular-form word, and it is commonly used as such.
- 27 *Ibadah* means worship or submission—in PAS' discourse, this includes the 'total' implementation of Allah's 'commandments'. There are two types of *ibadah*: *ibadah umum* (general *ibadah*) and *ibadah khusus* (special *ibadah*). The first refers to daily

activities that should be in line with Islamic teachings and performed with the intention of seeking *Allah's* pleasure (for example, supporting one's family, going to work with good intentions, etc.). However, according to PAS Youth discourse, to establish *hudud* (a part of Islamic Criminal Law) is *ibadah umum* as well, and compulsory (*wajib*). *Ibadah khusus* refers to Islamic ritual practices such as praying, fasting, pilgrimage or reciting the Qur'an. Some *ibadah khusus* are compulsory, whereas some are considered *Sunnah* (encouraged but not compulsory: for example, reciting the Qur'an).

- 28 For detailed accounts, see Emmerson (1995); Manan (1999); Pye (2000); Robison (1996); Thompson (2001).
- 29 See Bass (1983: 197), Beeson (2000: 346), Mohamad (2002). Mahathir proclaimed the 'Look East' policy in 1982 as an attempt to mold Malaysian economic development using 'Eastern' role models, which included first and foremost Japan, but also, for example, South Korea and India, which led to a significant improvement in bilateral and trade relations with these countries.
- 30 In 1998, *Newsweek* (15 March 2008) declared that Anwar Ibrahim was the 'Asian of the Year'.
- 31 According to the Malaysia's Penal Code Section 377, 'sodomy' can be punished with up to 20 years in jail and caning. For heterosexuals, both oral and anal sex is also banned and can be punished with comparable jail terms.
- 32 The person who caused Anwar's black eye was the former chief of the Malaysian police, Rahim Noor, who had 'ordered Anwar to be handcuffed and blindfolded before beating him up on 20 September 1998, less than one hour after his arrested (sic)' (*BBC*, 15 March 2000). He was fined RM2,000 (400 Euro) and was sentenced to two months in jail. However, despite his public confession of guilt (cf. ALIRAN 1999) the High Court (Mahkamah Tinggi) later dismissed the jail term.
- 33 For example, the cover of a book written by the popular PAS Youth activist Riduan Mohamad Nor (2008a) depicts the famous picture of Anwar Ibrahim having a black eye and wearing jail clothes. Another book depicting his black eye on its cover is Lee and Tan's (2009) *Where is Justice? Death and Brutality in Police Custody*.
- 34 On the historic development of PAS and DAP's rapprochements and alienations, see Chernov Hwang (2010: 643–47), Liow (2009: 77, 79, 85, 100), Noor (2004b: 632–33, 646, 666, 693).
- 35 According to Abdul Hamid (2009b: 21), 'Abdullah was the grandson and son of Haji Abdullah Fahim and Haji Ahmad Badawi respectively, two influential ulama from UMNO's religious section'.
- 36 In 2004, BN achieved 63.9 percent of the votes with a significantly higher number of seats (198 BN seats versus 20 opposition seats), a result of the Malaysian 'single member constituency'-based electoral system. The PAS won only seven seats (15.2 percent of votes), as opposed to the 27 seats (14.99 percent of votes) it had held after the previous election in 1999.
- 37 The institute's first chair was named after Badawi's grandfather, Syekh Abdullah Fahim.
- 38 The lyrics of the PAS hymn, as sung at most PAS events, enshrine the 'target of an Islamic State' (*matlamat Daulah Islamiah*) as one core principle of PAS' struggle.
- 39 Wikileaks sources suggest that the U.S. Embassy strongly suspected Najib's involvement, and report of unprecedented political interference throughout the court case, suppression of press reports and other questionable details (see Asia Sentinel 2011).
- 40 For an insightful analysis of governmental sloganeering in Malaysia during the last decades, see Kessler (2011).
- 41 The PAS politician Hatta Ramli claimed that the GTP was 'copied' from Pakatan Rakyat's 'economic manifesto', adding that if elected, Pakatan would furthermore

- 'do away with the NEP and install something much better to benefit all the Malays and the other races'. Hatta Ramli, quoted in *Malaysia Chronicle*, 29 August 2010.
- 42 The U.S. Embassy categorizes PERKASA as a 'militant' group, although PERKASA loudly protested this label and filed a police report (*New Straits Times*, 3 August 2010). However, in 2011, PERKASA founded a 'Brigade' (Briged Setia Negara), which operates under the RELA Corps (Ikatan Relawan Rakyat Malaysia), the latter being a paramilitary volunteer organization created by the Malaysian government, responsible for 'national defense', locating and arresting illegal migrants, and general homeland security (*Malaysiakini*, 27 April 2011).
- 43 In July 2010 PERKASA demanded the arrest of the MCA politician Wee Ka Siong under the ISA for questioning the privileged status of *bumiputera* (*The Malaysian Insider*, 30 June 2010). In April 2011, when Christian groups demanded freedom of religion in the context of a controversy over confiscated bibles written in *Bahasa Melayu*, PERKASA leader Ibrahim Ali threatened Christians not to 'test the patience' of Malays, adding that Malays had been patient for 'far too long' (My Sarawak 2011).
- 44 Several influential PAS members disagreed with the court decision, although they later accepted the party's request not to argue against it in public for the sake of party-internal loyalty (*wala'*). Among them was, most prominently, Haron Din, the PAS Deputy Spiritual Leader. One of PAS' 'liberals' also hinted that the internal discussion was highly controversial (Ahmad, D. 2010).
- 45 An Iranian cleric was performing a prayer sermon related to the celebration of *Ashura*, when the Selangor Islamic Religious Department (Jabatan Agama Islam Selangor, JAIS) raided the mosque, where a picture of Imam Khomeini was placed on the prayer room's wall (YouTube 2010b). The legal ground for the arrest was Section 12 (c) of the Selangor Syariah Criminal Enactment 1995 which bans insulting, rejecting or disputing the violation of instructions or *fatwas* issued by the local religious authorities. The discrimination of Shi'ite Muslims is further based on the Islamic Jurisdiction Administration Enactment 1989 (or Administration of Islamic Law 1989), which categorizes Shi'ite Islam as deviant.
- 46 Both the head of PKR's Youth Wing, Shamsul Iskandar, as well as the PAS Youth Deputy Chief, Ahmad Sabki, told me that they were used to constant surveillance and expected their telephones to be tapped (Interview with Shamsul Iskandar, Kuala Lumpur, 8 March 2010; Interview with Ahmad Sabki, Kuala Lumpur, 9 December 2009). I repeatedly witnessed the utilization of police for political purposes myself. In a remote area in Perak, where a PAS Youth mass event was scheduled to be held on a private compound of a religious school, police had constructed a roadblock early in the morning right in front of the entrance. All participants going in were photographed, and drivers' vehicle licenses were checked. Uniformed police also temporarily entered the compound. Plainclothes police were present as well and made video recordings. In his speech there, PAS leader, Nizar Jamaludin, sarcastically welcomed these plainclothes officers.
- 47 These three persons, who acted under the pseudonym 'Datuk T' were later identified, and then publicly 'explained' their action, with more questions arising than answers being given (*The Star*, 23 March 2010). They were: (1) the former chief minister of Melaka (1982–94) and UMNO member, Abdul Rahim Tamby Chik, who himself had to resign in the mid-1990s due to a court case pertaining to sex with an under-aged girl (*The Malaysian Insider*, 24 March 2011); (2) the UMNO member and former honorary consul to Thailand, Shazryl Eskay Abdullah; and (3) the treasurer of PERKASA, Shuib Lazim (*Malaysiakini*, 23 March 2010). The trio had invited media representatives to a five-star hotel, where they were led into a room to watch the sex-video one after the other, after being forced to give away their mobile phones and recording devices. According to PKR's member of Parliament, Johari Abdul, those who had seen the video were later offered 1 Mio RM

(230,000 Euro) for leaving the opposition. However, Rahim Thamby Chik claimed that PKR politicians themselves had offered to quit PKR, and demanded 1 Mio RM as immediate *wang pelincir* (lubricant money bribe) (*Free Malaysia Today*, 24 March 2010).

- 48 In 2003, DAP organized its National Day Celebration event under the theme 'Defending Secular Malaysia' (Siang 2003). In 2010 the DAP leader, Lim Kit Siang (2010), repeated DAP's stance with reference to the PR coalition and PAS' anti-secularist position ('DAP stand on Malaysia as a secular state constant and consistent—*hudud* laws and Islamic State are not Pakatan Rakyat policies').
- 49 At the PAS Youth Wing General Assembly in 2010, a PAS grassroots representative argued that if PAS was not even able to pay basic allowances to many of its activists, with some allegedly being forced to borrow the mobile phones of others in order to make a call, how could the public be convinced that PAS was able to manage the national economy?

### 3 The Islamic Party of Malaysia (PAS) and its Youth Wing

#### The organizational structure of PAS and its Youth Wing

To ensure proper contextualization this sub-chapter will briefly outline the organizational structure of PAS and its Youth Wing. Keeping with the theme of this book, the main focus will be on the structural framework and embeddedness of the PAS Youth (Dewan Pemuda PAS).

Within PAS, there are three wings (*dewan*) that enjoy equal status in the organizational hierarchy: the Religious Scholars Wing (Dewan Ulama(k) PAS), the Youth Wing (Dewan Pemuda PAS) and the Women's Wing (Dewan Muslimat PAS). A fourth wing, the PAS Non-Muslim Supporters' Wing (Dewan Himpunan Penyokong PAS, DHPP), was launched in 2010 but does not enjoy the same status as the other wings.

The PAS is structured along four organizational layers: national (*pusat*), state (*negeri*), district branch (*kawasan*) and sub-district branch (*cawangan*). Like the party itself, the PAS Youth is sub-structured on the following levels: national/*pusat* (Dewan Pemuda PAS Pusat, DPPP), state/*negeri* (Dewan Pemuda PAS Negeri, DPPN), and district/*kawasan* (Dewan Pemuda PAS Kawasan, DPPK). On the sub-district/*cawangan* level there is only a small Youth Bureau, if there is one present at all.

Under each PAS district/*kawasan*, there can be anything from a handful to over 100 sub-districts/*cawangan* (with no formal maximum limit), depending on the PAS community's presence in the region. The 'PAS heartland' state of Kelantan is the most densely covered territory. According to a PAS Youth leader from Kelantan, there were roughly 100 PAS sub-districts (*cawangan*) under each PAS district (*kawasan*) in 2010, with 'more than 1500 sub-districts in the entire state' (interview with Muhammad Hafiz Musa, Kota Bharu, 23 February 2010). He claimed a membership of 70,000 people in Kelantan, with approximately 35,000 belonging to the PAS Youth.

The PAS Youth had 180 district branches nationwide in 2010. Additionally, there are 222 parliamentary constituencies where a *kawasan* can be founded. The 42 constituencies that have not yet been covered by PAS are mostly located in Sabah and Sarawak (East Malaysia/Borneo), where PAS is in a marginal position, or, as Ibrahim Motalib\* argued, where it is 'still in the

initial stage' (interview with Ibrahim Mutalib\*, Kuala Lumpur, December 2009).

During my fieldwork, new PAS Youth *kawasan* were in the planning stage, such as one on the island of Labuan where the 'adult' PAS already maintains a small *kawasan*-branch. The foundation of a PAS Youth *kawasan* requires formal prerequisites and procedures, such as a minimum number of registered members (PAS Constitution 2009, Clause 59).

### *The Executive Central Committee*

On all organizational layers, PAS maintains an Executive Central Committee (Jawatankuasa Kerja), whose members are commonly referred to as 'AJK' (Ahli Jawatankuasa Kerja) or 'EXCO'. The same structure exists in the PAS Youth, with the exception of the *cawangan* level.

Within every PAS Youth Executive Central Committee, there are 'average AJKs' (Ahli Jawatankuasa Kerja Biasa), most of whom are internally elected biennially at General Assemblies (Muktamar Tahunan), while a smaller number are appointed by the youth chief (*ketua*).<sup>1</sup> In addition to the 'average AJKs', there are distinguished functionaries within the Central Committee. They comprise the Chief (*ketua*), Deputy Chief (*timbangan ketua*, no. 2), Second Deputy Chief (*naib ketua*, no. 3), Secretary General (*setiausaha*), Information Chief (*ketua penerangan*), Elections Director (*pengarah pilihan raya*) and Treasurer (*bendahari*). These top leaders (plus the Secretary General's three assistants/*penolong setiausaha*) constitute the so-called Jawatankuasa Dewan Harian Pemuda PAS (Pusat/Negeri/Kawasan), a sub-unit within each Central Committee. Like the other AJKs, the candidates for the posts of chief, deputy chief and second deputy chief are first nominated by branches from one lower organizational layer. Based on these nominations, a pre-selection takes place and some candidates may choose to withdraw their candidacy for various reasons. Finally, the chief, deputy chief and second deputy chief, and a number (on the national level 12) of members for the average AJK positions are elected by the delegates of the respective General Assembly. During these elections, each of the distinguished top posts is either contested by a handful (two–six) of candidates or is sometimes won uncontested. Once elected, the chief appoints his secretary general, treasurer, information chief and the elections chief with the consent of the other AJKs. Elections take place at General Assemblies on each layer every two years; every other two years a General Assembly without elections takes place. However, the realities within the regulatory framework for PAS internal elections can sometimes be different. For instance, in the PAS Youth Central Committee in the state of Selangor, for the 2011–13 tenure, not a single post was contested, and all changes were consensually decided in advance, without any second candidate running for the respective posts.

In the 2009–11 and 2011–13 tenures, there were altogether 32 AJKs in the national (*pusat*) PAS Youth Central Committee, with 12 elected and 20

appointed members plus the three top leaders (Dewan Pemuda PAS Pusat 2010: 16; *Harakah Daily*, 7 June 2011).

### ***Bureaus and departments***

Some AJKs also hold additional posts, especially in the so-called *lajnah*, *biro* and *jabatan*. On all organizational layers these ‘bureaus/departments’ are responsible for particularly defined fields of activity. The following structural information is rather static, but is important as it enables a general overview of the range of concerns and related institutionalized practices conducted by the PAS Youth in its organizational everyday life. When the PAS Youth information chief (2009–11), Suhaizan Kaiat, patiently explained to me PAS’ administrative structures and I told him about my frustration over the increasingly complicated details, he jokingly added ‘British admin!’ to our shared laughter.

Bureaus exist in both the ‘adult’ PAS and the PAS Youth. Within the national PAS Youth, the bureaus currently comprise the Bureau for Politics and Elections (Lajnah Politik dan Pilihanraya), Bureau for Information (Lajnah Penerangan), Bureau for Economy and Finance (Lajnah Ekonomi), Bureau for Welfare of Public Care (Lajnah Kebajikan dan Prihatin Rakyat), Bureau for Missionary Work and the Defense of Islam (Lajnah Dakwah dan Pembelaan Islam), Bureau for Tarbiyah and Caderization (Lajnah Tarbiyah dan Perkaderan), Bureau for National Unity and NGO Relations (Lajnah Perpaduan Nasional dan Hubungan NGO), Bureau for Sports, Culture and Art (Lajnah/Jabatan Kesenian, Kebudayaan dan Sukan), Bureau for Information Technology (Jabatan Teknologi Maklumat or Jabatan ICT), Bureau for New Media and Political Education (Jabatan Media Baru & Pendidikan Politik), Bureau for Research and Current Issues (Unit Kajian & Maklumbalas Isu Semasa), Bureau for Workers and Young Professionals (Jabatan Pekerja & Profesional Muda), Bureau for Sabah and Sarawak Affairs (Jabatan Hal Ehwal Sabah dan Sarawak), Bureau for Welfare and People’s Care (Lajnah Kebajikan & Prihatin Rakyat), Bureau for Education (Jabatan Pendidikan), Bureau for Law and Human Rights (Jabatan Undang-undang dan Hak Asasi Manusia), Bureau for the Federal Land Development Authority-controlled Malay Farmer Communities (Lajnah FELDA) and the Bureau for International Affairs (Lajnah Antarabangsa). This, however, is the national (*pusat*) level, which is superior and best organized. These bureaus are responsible for overseeing the activities of those in the lower organizational layers.

There are two ‘academies’ in the PAS Youth, the earlier-mentioned Youth Leadership Academy (Akademi Kepimpinan Pemuda, AKP) and a Youth Tarbiyah Academy (Akademi Tarbiyah Pemuda), an Institute for Policy Studies (Institut Polisi Studi, IPS), and two bureaus for pupils’ and graduates’ caderization (Jabatan Perkaderan Pelajar; Jabatan Perkaderan Graduan/Siswazah). Furthermore, a preschool organization (PASTI, Pusat Asuhan Tunas Islam) maintains kindergartens in all states. There is also a welfare and security

group called Unit Amal (also called Jabatan Amal). Both were founded by, and operate as part of the PAS Youth (for further details on PASTI and Unit Amal, see also Chapter 4).

### *The Syura Council*

The highest and most powerful institution within PAS is the Syura Council (Majlis Syura Ulama), a consultative guidance committee comprising the party's leading religious scholars (*syura* = Islamic consultation/deliberation). Prepared through changes in the PAS Constitution (*Perlembagaan PAS*) beginning with the 29th PAS General Assembly in 1983 under PAS President Yusof Rawa and officially founded in 1987 (Noor 2004b: 417), its main function is to control the policies of PAS and ensure that they are in line with the principles of Islam. Furthermore, it is also responsible for disciplinary matters. There is only one Syura Council for the entire party.

The Syura Council must meet at least every three months, or whenever its head, the Spiritual Leader (*mursyidul 'am*), requests a meeting (PAS Constitution 2009, Clause 8 [9]). The Council consists of 17 people (PAS Constitution 2009, Clause 8 [2]), comprising the Spiritual Leader, a Deputy Spiritual Leader (*timbangan mursyidul 'am*), a Secretary General (*setiausaha*), and 14 other Syura Council delegates (*ahli Majlis Syura Ulamak*). A minimum of nine Council members must be present in order to hold a meeting. To become appointed to the Council, one must be a religious scholar with formal education in Islamic Studies (*ulama*), knowledgeable of the central theological questions (*al-usul*) within the 'Syariah and its laws' (*syariat Islam dan hukum-hukumnya*), and/or be able to refer to such questions with proper understanding of the main sources of Islamic Law, the Qur'an, *Sunnah/Hadith* (model of the Prophetic tradition), *Ijmak* (consensus of religious scholars) and *Qias* (analogical reasoning). The person must be of 'just' character and must not have perpetrated 'great sins' (*dosa besar*) or continue to engage in small sins (*dosa kecil*) (PAS Constitution 2009, Clause 8 [3]).

Four Council members are appointed by the national PAS Executive Central Committee (Jawatankuasa Kerja PAS Pusat), four by the national PAS Ulama Wing Executive Central Committee (Jawatankuasa Kerja Dewan Ulamak PAS Pusat), two by the national PAS Youth Executive Central Committee (Jawatankuasa Kerja Dewan Pemuda PAS Pusat), and two by the national Women's Wing Executive Central Committee (Jawatankuasa Kerja Dewan Muslimat PAS Pusat). The remaining four members are chosen by the Syura Council itself (PAS Constitution 2009, Clause 8 [4]). All members are appointed for five years. The spiritual leader and deputy spiritual leader are elected by the Council itself for five-year terms. A two-third majority can oust the spiritual leader or his deputy (PAS Constitution 2009, Clause 8 [6]), and they can, like any Council member, also voluntarily resign. The spiritual leader appoints the Council's secretary general. If a member of the Council does not attend three subsequent meetings, his membership can be suspended.



Currently (2013), the PAS Youth chief, Ustaz Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi is a delegate of the Syura Council, although there is no general ruling that ensures that there is a Youth Wing representative in the Council. The PAS Youth's structurally guaranteed influence in this most decisive body within PAS is its right to appoint two delegates. Notably, with Ustazah Wahibah Tahir, the PAS Women's Wing currently (2013) also has one representative in the *Syura* Council.

### *A footnote on realities beyond formal structure*

Beyond the official structures, at least on PAS' sub-district branch (*cawangan*) level, things on the ground do not necessarily reflect what is officially written on paper. In the case of one small and rather remote sub-district that I visited in Kedah, its deputy chief (*timbangan ketua*) told me about his personal frustration with this condition. Leaving aside his accusations that the district (*kawasan*) leaders were ignorant of his needs and situation, made unrealistic requests and did not pay attention to what he wrote to them in his letters, it is interesting to note his revelation that there were shadow members on the list of his *cawangan*'s posts. While every sub-branch should in theory have the formally required functionaries and AJKs, such as a chief, deputy chief, secretary general, AJKs, youth bureau chief, etc., in the reality of his sub-branch several posts were filled with names, but some of these members rarely attended meetings. They were not, and some may even never have been, actively involved in any local PAS activities, while the regular meetings were only attended by a small core group of his sub-branch. This sub-branch is certainly not representative and would accordingly raise eyebrows in the thousands of well-working sub-branches elsewhere. Similarly, it must be emphasized that it would be unlikely to find such desolate conditions on any of the higher organizational layers. Yet, the case of this sub-branch and its frustrated deputy head reveals the need to keep in mind the existence of—at times deviant—micro-level realities beyond the surface of formal organizational meso-structure.

### **The role of youth in the history and contemporary development of PAS**

#### *The 'threat from the mountain': Kaum Muda and the formation of PAS*

Generational contestations and reformist Young Turks not only played a crucial role in groundbreaking transformations throughout PAS' eventful history, but also inspired the formation of the party itself, as its roots can be found in the aspirations of a younger generation's challenges to established orders.

The establishment of PAS in 1951 was foreshadowed by certain predecessor organizations' ideological trajectories within a particular (anti-)colonial

historic setting. Since the 1920s—with initial local roots in the 1890s—young Malay reformers, the Kaum Muda (Young Group), radically challenged the traditional Malay Islamic authorities (Roff 1990). The sultans, as the heads of Islam, as well as a class of established clerics loyal to them, had cooperated well with the colonial administration under the British paradigm of ‘indirect rule’. Inspired by early twentieth-century modernist interpretations of Islam, pan-Islamism and anti-colonialism in the Middle East and South Asia, and by Islamic reformist thinkers such as Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani (1838–97), his principle Muhammad Abduh (1849–1905), and the latter’s principle Rashid Rida (1865–1935), the Kaum Muda aspired to break with the tradition of the established Islamic elites in Malaya and the Dutch East Indies. They disagreed with the political and theological stance of the sultans and their *ulama*, and spread their ideas through Malay translations of Arabic texts in combination with their own publications. New streams of thought were disseminated through Islamic reformist journals such as the Egyptian *Al-Manar* (which was never printed in Malaya),<sup>2</sup> *Al-Imam* (which used *Al-Manar* as a model),<sup>3</sup> *Al-Ikhwān* and *Saudara*. Syed Sheikh Ahmad Al-Hadi (1867–1934), a Kaum Muda pioneer, was one of the key motivators for the production of these publications and/or their distribution in Southeast Asia (Roff 1967, 1970: 73; cf. Bluhm 1983; Burhanudin 2001: 4).

Some of the Kaum Muda Young Turks had studied in the Middle East or South India, most notably in Cairo, Mecca, Lahore, Qadian, Aligarh (Liow 2005: 55), and upon their return they not only brought their own personal experiences with the winds of change, but also new Islamic texts and ideas, which were appropriated for the Malayan context as anti-traditionalist tools of radical renewal. The subsequent generational contestation is referred to in Malaysian and Indonesian history books as the clash between the Kaum Muda (Young Group, the progressives) and Kaum Tua (Old Group, the conservatives) (Liow 2005: 55 ff., Noor 2004b: 19–28; Roff 1990). Through the localization of their ideas, the Kaum Muda established the ideological foundations on which PAS was built approximately two decades later.

In March 1947, a Kaum Muda-influenced Malay nationalist group, Parti Kebangsaan Melayu Malaya (PKMM; English: MNP, Malay Nationalist Party), itself a successor of the 1938-founded Kesatuan Muda Melayu (KMM), organized a conference entitled ‘*Persidangan Ekonomi-Agama Sa-Malaya*’ (Pan-Malayan Economic-Religious Conference) (Funston 1980: 88). Two influential ‘sons’ of the Kaum Muda movement and later founding fathers of PAS, Ustaz Abu Bakar al-Baqir (1907–74) and Dr. Burhanuddin Al-Helmy (1911–69), were key conveners of this conference.<sup>4</sup> The conference focused on the discussion of nationalist concerns and the anti-colonial struggle (ibid.: 87). As a result, the Majlis Agama Tertinggi Sa-Malaya (MATA, Pan-Malayan Supreme Religious Council) was created. In line with the Kaum Muda’s anti-traditionalist stream, MATA questioned the understanding of Islam as defended by the established Malay clerics (ibid.: 88). The MATA declared at its first meeting that ‘the Sultans were not competent to act in matters

affecting Muslim faith' and that their control of Islam was 'detrimental to the interests of the Muslim people' (ibid.). While the Malay tradition required the sultans' 'subjects' to be unconditionally loyal, MATA not only violated this normative order through open disrespect, but also boldly declared that the sultans should surrender 'their supreme Islamic powers to MATA' (ibid.). Its vision was based on the idea that *elected representatives* should be in charge of protecting Islamic interests in the Legislative, the Executive and the State bodies (ibid.).<sup>5</sup> Within months, PAS' predecessor MATA, which was born out of an idealistic youth movement, had established branches in all Malayan states. It sought to mobilize Malays for the formation of a post-colonial Muslim Malay order in the region, aiming at a Greater Malaya (*Melayu Raya*) whereby parts of the Dutch East Indies (later Indonesia) would be included.<sup>6</sup> The MATA's counter-hegemonic project thereby targeted not only the decolonization of British rule, but also an inner decolonization of Malay society from 'old' religious and political elites.

In the months following its foundation, MATA conducted several other strategic meetings, one of which was of particular importance for the formation of PAS. Like MATA's inaugural event, it took place at the Islamic school Madrasah Ma'ahad al-Ehya as-Sharif at Gunung Semanggul (Perak) from 13 to 16 March 1948. The tone became increasingly critical of UMNO. Founded by Malay nationalists in 1946, UMNO was accused of being too close with the British administration and traditional elites, and of doing too little for Malay and Islamic interests. Only one UMNO member was involved in the organizing committee, and traditionalist *imams*, *muftis* and *kadis* were also absent (Funston 1980: 90).<sup>7</sup> Within UMNO, suspicion about the overly 'radical' forces of its competitor MATA grew. The UMNO leader, Dato' Onn Jaafar, spoke of a 'threat from the mountain' (*ancaman bahaya dari gunung*), referring to Gunung Semanggul (mountain Semanggul). Indeed, UMNO's biggest Malay political rival for the next 60 years emerged from this location.

On 17 March 1948, a political party, Hizbul Muslimin (also called Parti Orang Muslimin Malaya), was formed (Funston 1980: 31, 40, 87), inspired by the Egyptian Ikhwanul Muslimeen (*Harakah Daily*, 11 February 2011) and led by Ustaz Abu Bakar al-Baqir, who was the head of the *madrasah* in Gunung Semanggul. Hizbul Muslimin's creation aimed at transforming MATA into a political party, and rested on the following ideological tenets: (1) achieving independence, (2) constructing a society grounded in Islam, and (3) creating an Islamic State (ibid.: 90).<sup>8</sup> After some socialist-leftist party members questioned the Islamic State goal, Hizbul Muslimin's President Abu Bakar announced that he would clarify the matter at a later date, and assured that Malay nationalism had precedence over Islam (ibid.: 90–91). Hizbul Muslimin's membership was estimated to be around 2,500, and a youth wing called Sabab Hizbul Muslimin was established (ibid.: 91).

Hizbul Muslimin was founded at an eventful moment in Malayan history. According to PAS sources (*Harakah Daily*, no date, accessed 6 June 2011), at

that time there was a powerful 'spirit of *jihād*' (*semangat jihād*) for the *ummah* and against the British administration. However, after the British brought emergency measures into law in June 1948, several Hizbul Muslimin leaders were arrested. Though the actual backdrop of the Malayan Emergency (1948–60) was a guerilla war with the military arm of the Malayan Communist Party (MCP, militant wing: Malayan National Liberation Army, MNLA), the British also used the opportunity to weaken other political opponents. Hizbul Muslimin was accused of having links to the Communist Party, despite the Islamic party's rejection of communism. In August 1948, after several Hizbul Muslimin leaders were detained, the party's activities ceased. Far from being defeated, the founders of MATA/Hizbul Muslimin formed a new political party soon after. On 24 November 1951 in Butterworth (Penang) the Persatuan Islam Sa-Malaya (Pan-Malayan Islamic Association), or PAS, was born.<sup>9</sup>

PAS was founded as both a successor of Hizbul Muslimin and a breakaway of UMNO (Funston 1980: 41, 92). While UMNO rejected many of MATA's demands, for example, pertaining to the role of sultans and the Islamic State, among others, several UMNO members, particularly from its Islamic Department, joined the PAS establishment. Some ex-UMNO members had earlier founded an UMNO Ulama Organization (Persatuan Ulama-Ulama Sa-Malaya), which transgressed UMNO's official stance and was closely related to MATA/Hizbul Muslimin's positions. The decision to form a new Islamic party together with the activists of MATA/Hizbul Muslimin arose from this UMNO-based organization. The former head of UMNO's Islamic Department, Ahmad Fuad Hassan, was appointed to draft PAS' Constitution and later became the organization's first president.

In these formative years, there were three main ideological streams within PAS: first, nationalist and socialist approaches that were characteristic of PKMM; second, *Hizbul Muslimin's* more Middle Eastern-inspired political Islamic modernist approach; and third, a communitarian-minded 'anti-UMNO protest movement of the 1950s' (Funston 1980: 161). According to Funston (*ibid.*), at that time 'PAS' main commitment ... was to a *Melayu* nationality, an Islamic state, an Islamic socialist economy, and anti-colonialism'. Of the numerous influential founding fathers, only Burhanuddin al-Helmy, Hasan bin Munas, Abdul Rahman Limbong and Abu Bakar al-Baqir shall be named here.<sup>10</sup>

### *Ideological transformations in PAS' history*

Although PAS has always been an internally diverse organization, with different factions and streams of thought negotiating the course of the party, thereby forming a heterogeneous collective actor, PAS' overall history can be broadly differentiated into three ideological periods (Müller 2010: 758–60). In its initial period, PAS' approach was a mixture of socialist–leftist, Malay nationalist and modernist Islamic elements. Nowadays, Dr Burhanuddin Helmy (1911–69, tenure 1956–69) is most prominently associated with this

phase. At that time, a large portion of PAS' struggle was anti-colonial and oriented towards the formation of post-colonial order in Malaya and the larger Malay-speaking region.

A more narrowly oriented ethno-nationalist course followed under the leadership of Mohamad Asri Muda (1923–92, tenure 1969–82). This period must also be understood against the backdrop of the 1969 'race riots' and the excessive growth of Malay communitarianism and hostile/fearful racial polarization within the Malaysian society. In these 'Asri years' (Noor 2004a: 213 ff.), for the first and final time in the history of PAS, the organization formed a coalition with UMNO and joined BN between 1973 and 1977.

The third period, which is of most importance for the present study, is the current ideological period. It began in the post-1982 or Ulama Leadership (*Kepimpinan Ulama*) era. At least on the level of normative discourse, during this phase an ideologically 'de-racialized', newly Middle Eastern-inspired and more internationalist—although still highly localized (Müller 2010; Noor 2011)—brand of Islamism became dominant within PAS. To a significant degree, this shift was born out of an inter-generational contestation. In that sense, it is—to some extent—comparable to the conflict between the Kaum Muda and Kaum Tua, as once again a group of reformist Young Turks brought about a fundamental transformation in the organization. Many of them had studied in Egypt, Saudi Arabia or India, had come into personal contact with the Muslim Brotherhood and were inspired by its ideology. Some had witnessed the Arab–Israeli wars from within the Arabic world, and many were influenced by the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979. In a spectacular confrontation at the PAS General Assembly in 1982, they verbally attacked the scandal-driven Asri Muda and his 'old' camp; Asri was shouted down during his attempts to speak to the party members (Liow 2009: 35–36; Noor 2004a: 326). The PAS Youth formally rejected his presidential address, which happened for the first time in PAS' history. Asri resigned and a new generation of PAS leaders, including Yusof Rawa as president and Fadzil Noor, Abdul Hadi Awang, Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat and Nakhaie Ahmad as some of its key figures, emerged. Starting with the General Assembly in 1983, they institutionalized deep-seated organizational and ideological innovations within PAS. During this time, Malay racialism began to be perceived as un-Islamic '*asabiyah*' (ethnocentrism/chauvinistic communalism/tribalism). Furthermore, cooperation with the 'oppressor' UMNO was condemned in categorical Islamist rhetoric. Within PAS, the Islamic Republic of Iran-derived principle of 'ulama dominance of the party' (Noor 2004b: 418), Ulama Leadership, was established, irrespective of PAS' status as a Sunni party and despite the fact that both the Iranian model and 'the institutionalization of *ulama* rule (were) a Shi'ite tradition that had no historical Sunni precedence' (Liow 2009: 36). The superior post of a spiritual leader (*mursyidul 'am*) was created and was formally launched in 1987 (prepared since 1983).<sup>11</sup> From that point on, certain decisions could only be made by religious scholars in the newly created Syura Council. Muslim Brotherhood-inspired Islamic education methods

(*tarbiyah*) and regular study circles (*usrah/halaqah*) were systematically introduced, and more intense forms of networking with Islamic political parties and movements abroad was facilitated. In sum, the once counter-hegemonic Young Turks had structurally and ideologically changed the appearance of PAS and re-interpreted the party's Islamic cause. They had used the ritual-specific liminal period of their protest to change the existing order.<sup>12</sup> Once this anti-structural phase of liminality ceased, a new fixed structure—the normative order of PAS under Ulama Leadership—was installed and stabilized. Finally, the counter-hegemonic youth became the new establishment and ruling elite of PAS, and many of its key actors continue to occupy key positions in the party until today.

### *Internationalist influences: the rise and fall of PAS' Iran connection*

For a brief but decisive period of time, when the Young Turks who established the normative order of Ulama Leadership arose as a powerful new force within the party, Iran and its Islamic Revolution played a decisive role in PAS.<sup>13</sup> The developments in Iran had electrified an idealistic young generation—or, in sociological terms, more precisely a sub-grouping within this 'generational unit' (Cavalli 2004: 157)—that wanted to bring about fundamental political changes towards 'a government of God' (Noor 2004b: 331). These activists also received ideological motivation from other developments abroad at that time, most notably the Arab–Israeli wars, the Afghan *mujahidin's* resistance to the Soviet invasion in December 1979, Israel's attack on Lebanon in 1978, the attacks against the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood in 1979, the crackdown on Rachid Gannouchi's Jamaah al-Islamiyyah (a predecessor of Ennahda) in Tunisia in 1979, Anwar Sadat's ban of all Islamist organizations in 1979, and the increased transnational popularization of the Muslim Brotherhood's ideas (Noor 2004a: 290–91). Furthermore, the collective mobilization of the time was fueled by many of the PAS Young Turks' personal experiences abroad, especially in the Middle East and South Asia, which led to a lasting indoctrination within the framework of the contemporary transnational Islamic resurgence.

One key actor in PAS' radical transformation during this period was Yusof Rawa, the first PAS president following the Young Turks' takeover in 1982–83. He had previously served as the Malaysian ambassador in Turkey, Afghanistan and Iran (Abu Bakar 2009: 14; Noor 2004b: 343) and witnessed both the late government of the Iranian Shah Reza Pahlavi and the rise of the revolutionary atmosphere. He was 'deeply moved by the resolve and the determination of the Iranian revolutionaries' (Noor 2004b: 343) and forged respective networks. Several other young PAS members, such as Mohamad Sabu, later visited Iran to learn from the revolution and underwent educational programs organized by the Iranian government (cf. Drummond 1983: 308; Sabu 2010). Upon their return to Malaysia, they aspired to import elements of the Iranian model into the Malaysian context, in terms of state

organization as well as the party itself. The Ulama Leadership principle of PAS was, as mentioned earlier, tailored according to the Iranian principle of *velayat-e faqih* (Guardianship of the Islamic Jurists). The Syura Council was created based on Iranian inspiration (Abdul Hamid 2009a: 151). The newly formed post of a spiritual leader (*mursyidul 'am*) to some extent resembled the Iranian post of the supreme leader (*rahbare mo'azzame enghelab*), while at the same time mirroring the Muslim Brotherhood's post of *murshid 'am*, which Yusof Rawa later named as his primary inspiration (Noor 2004b: 418). The Iranian revolution thereby had a crucial 'impact in ideologically transforming PAS from a Malay nationalist party with Islamic aspirations to a national Islamist actor with important transnational dimensions' (Abdul Hamid 2009a: 151). From the 1980s onward, the Young Turks-led PAS loudly emphasized 'demands for a juridical Islamic state' and reinvented 'its discourse with political vocabulary in line with contemporary trends in global Islamism' (ibid.: 151), for example, by depicting itself in the manner of the Iranian revolutionaries as the voice of the *mustazaffin* (oppressed) in opposition to the *mustakbirin* (oppressors). The former PAS President Asri Muda, who by then had become a UMNO member, once even claimed that Ayatollah Khomeini had secretly appointed a PAS politician 'as his emissary in Southeast Asia' (ibid.: 251; cf. Noor 2004b: 388; Nair 1997: 135–36). However, to date, it remains to be determined if there is any truth to the story as information about the post's birth and possible disappearance has yet to be uncovered.

In contrast to today's standards, at that time several Malaysians went to study at Iranian theological faculties in the early 1980s (Marcinkowski 2010: 190), including PAS members (Abdul Hamid 2009a: 151). Mohamad Sabu (2010, no page), who was detained under the Internal Security Act (ISA) from 1984–86 and 1987–89 for, among other charges, alleged attempts to import Iran's Islamic Revolution to Malaysia, retrospectively stated:

Khomeini's movement ... drew my attention as well as my friends' in PAS Youth in the early 1980s. ... we studied it, followed the events. ... A small number of PAS Youth members became ardent followers of Imam Khomeini's message. A few of them attended courses held in Iran. Amongst the success of such interaction was the setting up of Amal Unit (sic) which copied the success of the *Jihad Sazendagi* (JZ) movement in Iran.

PAS' obsession with Iran was short-lived, partly because 'excesses of post-revolutionary Iran became difficult to bear' (Abdul Hamid 2009a: 151), even though until the present time there is a tendency to deny or claim that these occurrences were over-exaggerated by Western-fabricated anti-Islamic propaganda. Mohamad Sabu is probably the last prominent PAS leader who still proudly describes himself as a 'Khomeinist'<sup>14</sup> in public, despite holding a PAS-internally marginal position on this matter. Only a few years following Iran's revolution, the initially pro-Iranian (Noor 2004b: 343) PAS President,

Yusof Rawa, who at the same time always sought to balance Islamist internationalism and Malay local identity, had 'advised rank-and-file PAS members to limit their emulation of Iranians to their revolutionary spirit in fighting oppressive rule, minus their sectarian beliefs' (Abdul Hamid 2009a: 151). The fascination with the Shi'ite revolution in Iran was soon supplanted by an increased Sunni-revivalist drive toward the purification of a monolithic concept of Islamic faith (*aqidah*) and authenticity. Notably, PAS still invites representatives from Iran to its General Assemblies, but unlike in the earlier days of the Ulama Leadership takeover, they are not provided a central platform anymore to propagate their ideology.

In general, the current PAS has an ambivalent relationship with Iran and the Shi'ite 'brothers', although a very small PAS faction still, largely in private, adheres to Shi'ite teachings. Despite 'the Iranian revolution leaving an indelible imprint on PAS in the form of an ulama leadership' (Abdul Hamid 2009a: 151), 30 years after the revolution many regard Shi'ite Islam to be 'deviant teaching' (*ajaran sesat*) and view it with a great deal of skepticism. Dr Raja Ahmad Iskandar al-Hiss, the PAS Youth leader responsible for international affairs including contact with Iran and Lebanon, admitted, 'there are a lot of ideas about Shia, ... some say it is diverting from Islam itself'. He also, however, stressed his intention to 'put aside' the differences and 'unite' (interview with Dr Raja Ahmad Iskandar, Kuala Lumpur, 7 December 2009).

In spite of such idealistic and undoubtedly sincere hopes, it appears that PAS is moving further and further away from seeing itself as ideologically and emotionally connected to Shi'ite Islam, aside from belonging to the same *umat Islam*. Even though guests from Iran and Lebanon's Hezbollah are regularly invited to PAS General Assemblies, in 2010 no Shi'ite representative was provided a forum for public discussion, in contrast to Sunni guests from Eritrea, the Maldives, the Philippines and Palestine, all of whom gave speeches. A HAMAS delegate was even provided space for two lengthy speeches. According to Ali Yahayha\*, a PAS source, this was perceived by some PAS members as 'discrimination', arguing that in the end, Abdul Hadi Awang finally apologized for not giving the Shi'ite guest from Hezbollah an opportunity to speak when he met him in Kuala Lumpur before the latter returned to Beirut (informal conversation with Ali Yahaya\*, Kuala Terengganu, 2010). In a book co-published by PAS Youth activist Riduan Mohamad Nor, the—among young PAS members—currently highly popular and ideologically influential author gives an overview of 34 'leaders of the modern Islamic movement' (*tokoh-tokoh gerakan Islam abad moden*). As a member of the more Shi'ite-friendly faction critically noted in one of our meetings, this book (Hashim and Nor 2010) does not mention a single Shi'ite thinker, thereby ignoring the impact that Shi'ite ulama had on the transnational 'Islamic resurgence' (*kebangkitan Islam*) since the late 1970s. Riduan Mohamad Nor's colleague, the current (since 2012) PAS Youth Deputy Chief, Nik Mohamad Abduh, explicitly warned his fellow PAS members in 2008 that 'the Shia are very dangerous', as they 'damage the holy faith' (Abduh 2008c: no page,



author's translation). Speaking of a 'Shi'ite threat in PAS' (*anasir shiyah dalam PAS*), he added that 'the Shia was/were born from feelings of love and spite, and they are scorching the holiness (of Islam), blind with love' (ibid.)—although they were 'people of the *Syhadah*' (*ahli Kalimah Syhadah*, Abduh 2010: 68). At that time, however, he added that the Shi'ite Hezbollah was 'standing side-by-side with us against the machinery of the infidels on this earth', referring in part to Hezbollah's fight against 'the Jews who are carrying the flag of destruction on earth' (Abduh 2010: 68, author's translation). Later, in the context of Hezbollah's role in the ongoing civil war in Syria, he 'renamed' Hezbollah (literally: the party of Allah) as Hizb al-Taghut, the 'party of idolatry/error', that was oppressing the right-guided *umat Islam* (Abduh 2013, author's translation). In his view, 'SHIA (original emphasis) extremists are the ones behind Hezbollah and Iran' (*jelaslah kepada umat Islam bahawa SYIAH pelampau adalah di belakang Hizbollah dan Iran*). The PAS leader Ustaz Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi (2011d, author's translation), who describes his own 'teaching background' as 'Salafi' unambiguously emphasizes that 'PAS does not accept Shi'ite Islam' and that whenever there is proof that a PAS member practices Shiism, PAS would 'take action' and 'punish' him/her. In response to accusations that PAS was 'infiltrated by the Shia', he explained that 'we all don't want PAS to become Shia'; 'if non-Muslims accept Islam, say the *syhadah* and stop practicing sins, they can become PAS members; if a Shia Muslim wants to join PAS, he must leave Shiism first' (Tantawi 2011d, author's translation). When it comes to the condemnation and sanctioning of such 'deviant teachings', the PAS Youth's categorical religious intolerance is perfectly in line with the 'faith protection' policies of UMNO's religious bureaucracy, but rarely compatible with the pluralist and civil liberties-oriented ideologies of its coalition partner DAP and the more liberal parts of PKR. Obviously, in this field, the PAS Youth is not exactly at the forefront of engaging in 'global discourses on freedom and pluralist societies' (Boubekeur and Roy 2012: 13), or stressing 'rights instead of duties, (and) plurality in place of a singular authoritative voice' (Bayat 2007: 10–11), as the post-Islamism hypothesis would suggest. Furthermore, the Internet doesn't undermine their 'top-down, authoritarian system of knowledge transmission' (Roy 2012: 8), as much of PAS' new anti-Shia discourses are now taking place via the weblogs and Facebook pages of young *ulama* and their followers.

An example of how categorical anti-Shia sentiments can become may be found in a video posted by a PAS member on a social-networking site. Containing an Arabic speech by Sheikh Adnan Al-Ar'oor, a Syrian Sunni-Salafi cleric, with additional Malay subtitles, the video (YouTube 2010a) warns about Shias and portrays them as liars, troublemakers and as one of the biggest threats to the *ummah*. On Facebook, several PAS key figures were (involuntarily) 'tagged'. Prior to the General Election of 2013, there were even brochures distributed that accused certain PAS leaders themselves of being Shia, with the obvious purpose of damaging their Islamic credentials (personal information from Farish A. Noor). The senior PAS Deputy President, Mohamad Sabu (2010, no

page), regrettably diagnosed such tendencies within and outside of his party as 'propaganda of the Shii threat', which has increasingly conquered Malay Islamic discourses and further splits the Muslim community.

In sum, the temporality of PAS' Iran-orientation, the short-lived enthusiasm for an Islamic Revolution among some young PAS members in the early 1980s, and the shift from fascination to alienation is characteristic of the dynamic historicity and contested discursive nature of PAS' social biography. Furthermore, the PAS Youth has been a key agent behind many of these changes. After moving away from a fascination with Iran, PAS' current internationalist agenda is much more concerned with the party's well-established contact with foreign Sunni Islamist organizations such as Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiyyah (HAMAS, Palestine/Syria), Ikhwanul Muslimeen (Egypt, Jordan, Syria, etc.), Jamaat-e Islami (Pakistan, Sri Lanka), Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF, Philippines), Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (PKS, Indonesia), and Partai Bulan Bintang (PBB, Indonesia). Contact with Iran and Shi'ite organizations is more generally maintained on a comparably low scale.<sup>15</sup> The Lebanese Hezbollah acts as the closest remaining Shi'ite ally (Müller 2010: 763, 778, 782), but even that connection has been put into question by many PAS members vis-à-vis Hezbollah's involvement in the Syrian civil war, where the Shi'ite militia is now fighting against Sunni groups. PAS' normative calls for a united *ummat Islam* remain inevitably thwarted by simultaneous anti-pluralist insistence on a monolithic concept of Sunni Islamic authenticity, as it has emerged in the era of Islamic resurgence since the 1970s. In historical retrospect, some irony lies in the fact that this resurgence, resulting from its purist dimension, and inspired to a significant degree by the Shi'ite model of the Islamic Republic of Iran, has turned against the Shia.

### *Islamic struggle post-reformasi: recent developments in PAS*

As a result of the *reformasi* movement of 1998–99, PAS started to align with DAP, PRM and the Parti Keadilan (the latter two later merged into PKR), for the first time in its history. The coalition with the secularist DAP was especially surprising for many and led to enduring uncertainties within PAS. While some PAS members would like to see improvements and more pragmatic realpolitik within this coalition, others feel alienated by what they regard to be a highly compromise-based cooperation.

Hatta Ramli, a member of Parliament and the present treasurer of PAS, argued that external events tend to open the door for previously unexpected developments, comparing the Iranian revolution, which paved the way for the PAS-internal 'revolution' for Ulama Leadership, with the external event of Anwar Ibrahim's arrest that led to renewed changes within PAS:

Sometimes you need a big outside event, to create a clash of ideas. When there is a big clash of ideas, then there will be a movement forward. People will have a discourse, hopefully, and something new will come.

Pakatan (Rakyat, at that time called Barsian Alternatif) was a good beat. At that time (the beginning of *reformasi* movement) we were trying hard to be at the center stage of politics. In 1998, 1999, there was an opportunity, ok? (The then-PAS Youth chief) Mahfuz Omar and others were behind the movement, the GERAK (Malaysian People's Justice Movement) movement at that time, that brought (DAP's) Lim Kit Siang and (Keadilan's) Wan Azizah to the same stage, which was something unthinkable. You can't imagine Lim Kit Siang going to the PAS Headquarter at that time. It was like asking us to sit down with, hmm, communists maybe! Not that they are communists, but to show how difficult it was, how polarized we were, how far apart.

(Interview with Hatta Ramli, Kuala Lumpur, 17 November 2009)

During this eventful moment in PAS history which had opened a window to new political possibilities, the PAS Youth elites were once again those who pushed political transformations forward, ahead of most of the party's senior leaders. While the ritual protest-specific 'anti-structure' and liminal feeling of 'spontaneous *communitas*' (Turner 1969: 132) during the *reformasi* demonstrations emotionally and pragmatically united the opposition into a 'collective heartbeat', shortly afterwards PAS' official course returned to its legalist 'fundamentals'. Consequently, DAP felt betrayed and left the coalition in 2001. The General Elections of 2004 meant a dramatic setback, as what was left of the crumbling Barisan Alternatif finally broke apart. While PAS had prior to 2004—without success—tried to implement *hudud* laws in Terengganu and passionately campaigned for an Islamic State, DAP believed that there was no longer any common ground remaining between its insistence on secularism and PAS' Islamic State vision. Shocked by the election results, most PAS leaders softened their tone in public, and decided to emphasize 'the substance of an Islamic State instead of the term' (interview with PAS Youth Executive Central Committee member Mohd Taufiq\*, Kuala Lumpur, 22 January 2010) in order to win over larger parts of the population. Some—though not all—PAS key figures realized that without the acceptance of parts of the 40 per cent non-Muslim Malaysians and active engagement in respective coalitions, PAS' goals could not be achieved. Among progressives in PAS, the conviction grew that patience and compromise were necessary for the time being in order to form the government and thus change the state apparatus from within. After the much less hardline Islamist campaign and consequently a much more successful election in 2008 (with 82 of 222 parliamentary seats and five of 14 states won by the opposition), Barisan Alternatif was revived as Pakatan Rakyat (PR) on 1 April 2008.

Theoretically, all members of the PR coalition agreed to make some serious compromises. The conviction that it is a foundational religious duty to establish an Islamic State and society 'fully' governed by Islamic Law, though, was in principle never given up, and some PAS hardliners still argued for it in public. Nevertheless, the *degree of public emphasis* decreased

considerably, and terms like ‘good governance’, ‘social justice’, ‘transparency’ and ‘civil society’ became an integral part of PAS’ terminology. However, Liow (2009: 203) correctly summarizes the often downplayed dilemma among PR supporters that, beyond the surface,

(N)otwithstanding laudable efforts to bridge the differences, the foundational ideological premises of PAS and DAP remain fundamentally at odds: the former will never abandon its Islamic state objective, just as the latter will never accept it.

As anyone willing to listen to the influential hardliners in PAS, such as the senior *ulama* who control the authoritative Syura Council, will quickly find out, the decision to keep quiet in public about the legalist core goals is only of temporal, tactical and fragile nature. Since 2009, the PAS Youth leadership is also openly highlighting its renewed aspiration for an Islamic State and respective legislation in no uncertain terms (see, e.g. Tantawi 2011a). The dominant forces within the PAS Youth hope, however, that their ‘*dakwah*’ (missionary work) toward DAP will bear fruits, and questionably claim that for the first time in its history, DAP has started to understand Islam. Many DAP members feel rather alienated by becoming reduced to receivers of *dakwah*, being seen as targets of one-directional missionary communication rather than a serious dialog partner *at eye level* in a coalition and political discourse *among equals*. The element of ‘openness to persuasion by reasons referring to the claims of others as well as one’s own’ (Michelman 1989: 293) as a necessary element of an equal deliberative democratic discourse, as defined by Frank Michelman and prominently referred to by Jürgen Habermas (Habermas 1998: 244) in his normative ideal-theory, is provided neither by PAS nor DAP.

### **PAS and the non-Muslims: the rise of Dewan Himpunan Penyokong PAS**

As nearly 40 percent of the population in Malaysia is non-Muslim, and UMNO will always keep a certain support base, it is practically impossible that PAS will ever win an absolute parliamentary majority and rule the country on its own. Thus, PAS needs the acceptance of at least some non-Muslim sections of society to come closer to its goal of an Islamic Rule (*Daulah Islamiyah*) that is enshrined in the PAS Constitution and anthem. However, for decades, PAS has largely ignored the requirements arising from this demographic reality, with little interest in multi-religious coalitions or respective compromise. Non-Muslims were long seen primarily through a xenophobic exclusivist lens as being *kafir/kufar* (infidels).<sup>16</sup> Except during its involvement in BN under Asri Muda’s controversial leadership (1973–78), PAS was never part of a coalition with non-Muslim parties until entering the Barisan Alternatif project in 1999.<sup>17</sup> Even then, according to the DAP

functionary Chen\*, especially in the PAS Ulama Wing sharp resistance remained, and PAS showed little readiness to compromise on its hardline Islamist positions (interview with Chen\*, Ipoh, March 2010). While, as mentioned earlier, PAS envisions a concept of Islamic justice grounded in the formula that 'justice = Islam = the Syariah and its laws', DAP and indeed many other non-Muslims have incompatible conceptions of 'justice' in mind. Furthermore, until today several PAS members continue to distrust DAP, based on racist anxieties (the PAS Youth leader Zarif\*, for example, told me that DAP sections were linked to 'Chinese triads'), although it must be stressed that there are also remarkable exceptions, such as the PAS Youth activist Khairul Faizi Ahmad Kamil who tries hard to overcome such distrust, e.g. by wishing Chinese citizens a Happy Chinese New Year, circulating pictures of himself together with Chinese friends, or making Facebook postings in Chinese script. At the same time, however, many DAP members distrust PAS and suspect hidden 'extremist' agendas. PAS' and DAP's main common ground remains a shared enemy, BN, and a desire to come into power to create a 'better' Malaysia. Should they ever govern together on the national level, they will face serious problems due to substantial differences, and currently suppressed, but nevertheless remaining, ideological incompatibilities and communalist sentiments. Once PAS and DAP are forced to spell out their positions on polysemous signifiers like 'social justice' and the desirable source of legislation ('divine' vs. human), and practically implement subsequent policies as a government coalition, massive clashes are likely to erupt.

Peter Kreuzer (2001: 61, author's translation) rightly argues that 'within PAS' theological meta-narrative there is no place for a pluralist society on an equal footing'. However, there may be some space for an *Islamist* conception of Syariah-based plurality, which would exist under the supremacy of Islamic rule and designate non-Muslims the *unequal* role of a 'protected minority' (*dhimmī/kafir dhimmī*). Beyond its multi-religious coalition projects, PAS has developed its own project of integrating non-Muslims into its supposedly divine struggle.

In 2004, PAS founded the PAS Non-Muslim Supporters' Club (Kelab Penyokong PAS, KPP). These 'supporters' were initially not party members, as membership was open to Muslims only, but were later granted a limited membership status in 2010. Several state branches of this Club were founded during the last few years, and by 2010 it had at least 20,000 registered non-Muslim members, including those from the ethnic Indian, Chinese, Iban and Siam communities. Balendran Balasubramaniam, a youth leader of the KPP, claimed 22,000 Indian members plus several more from other 'races' in February 2010 (interview with Balendran Balasubramaniam, Kajang, 28 February 2010).

A leading architect behind this innovation was Dr Mujahid Yusof Rawa, the son of the former PAS President Yusof Rawa. Dr Mujahid is currently responsible for the Non-Muslim Supporters' organization (KPP/DHPP) through his post as director of the PAS Bureau for National Unity. At the

time of KPP's creation in 2004, he was a key member of the PAS Youth, and today he is widely known as one of the most 'liberal'-minded senior PAS politicians, described by Yang Razali Kassim (2009) to embody a 'new PAS'. Currently, however, Mujahid's status is disputed, since he has published a book (Rawa 2010) that reveals party-internal conflicts and calls for reforms within PAS, such as rethinking the sacrosanct principle of Ulama Leadership. This move, in fact, even further increased his popularity outside the party, but led to sharp opposition from within.

Initially the KPP project met heavy resistance but increasingly won support from other PAS leaders; today many PAS members express great pride in it. In 2010, after controversial deliberations behind the scenes, the KPP was transformed into a wing (*dewan*), the PAS Non-Muslim Supporters' Wing (Dewan Himpunan Penyokong PAS, DHPP). DHPP was given its own constitution (Perlembagaan Dewan Himpunan Penyokong PAS), and the PAS Constitution was respectively amended. On 23 May 2010, DHPP was officially launched (*Harakah Daily*, 11 May 2010), followed by an opening ceremony at the PAS General Assembly in June 2010. For the first time, non-Muslims were allowed to become PAS members; however, they still do not have equal membership rights—both individually and in terms of their wing's status. Nevertheless, the significance of this organizational transformation, which was initially pushed forward by PAS Youth elites, alongside veteran politicians such as the late Hassan Shukri, is highly significant.

The PAS Deputy President, Mohamad Sabu, argued that this was the first case worldwide in which an Islamic party had not only forged a coalition with non-Muslims or designated posts to them, but had also formed a wing and granted membership rights to non-Muslims (personal conversation with Mohamad Sabu, Frankfurt, June 2010). Dr Mujahid Yusof Rawa stated that 'the foundation of DHPP will write history within PAS to prove that today PAS receives increasing support from non-Muslims' (quoted from *Harakah Daily*, 11 May 2010, author's translation), and the PAS President Abdul Hadi Awang declared that 'PAS tries to unite all races/ethnic groups in Malaysia with an open door for non-Muslims to join PAS' (PAS Homepage 2010, author's translation).

The DHPP's current head (*ketual/pengerusi*) is the ethnic Chinese Hu Pang Chaw, its deputy chief (*timbang*) is the ethnic Indian N. Balasubramaniam. In addition, there are five vice-presidents (*naib ketua*), a secretary general (*setiausaha*), a treasurer (*bendahari*), and eighteen Executive Central Committee members. There are plans to create an additional Youth Bureau (Biro Pemuda) and a Women's Bureau (Biro Wanita), with a youth chief (*ketua pemuda* DHPP) and a women's chief (*ketua wanita* DHPP). DHPP's forerunner KPP already had a youth section (Kelab Penyokong Muda PAS, KPMP) since November 2008 (*The Star*, 4 November 2008). At every PAS General Assembly, the DHPP will have 'official representatives' (*pemerhati rasmi*) that attend the event and give speeches, but its members have yet no institutionalized right to participate in party decisions beyond those pertaining to DHPP, and have no representative in the PAS Executive Central Committee.

In February 2010 I met the current DHPP's Youth leader, Balendran Balasubramaniam, an Engineering student who happens to be the son of DHPP's Deputy Chief, N. Balasubramaniam. He introduced himself to me in Malay as the Youth Chief of the PAS Supporters Club from the Indian community (Ketua Pemuda Kelab Penyokong PAS Kaum India). At that time, there was a structural separation between Indian and Chinese supporters, mirroring the ethnic segregation of Malaysian society. However, this structure, which was still part of DHPP's predecessor KPP, was apparently abandoned when the wing was formally established a few months afterwards. According to Balendran Balasubramaniam, in 2008 the memberships of KPP exploded, whereas in the previous years they were rather low. This increased influx was likely caused by PAS' decision to join Pakatan Rakyat, and its new approach to soften public rhetoric and speak of 'PAS For All' (or '*PAS Untuk Semua*') instead of emphasizing the alleged maliciousness and impurity of the 'infidels'.

However, in an informal conversation, a senior PAS politician admitted doubts about DHPP, as it was a potential source of problems in the future. DHPP members were easy targets for UMNO and the Special Branch and could potentially be used to infiltrate PAS. Not only could they be spies, but they could also be 'bought' by political opponents to create trouble from within. Their lack of understanding of Islam, and thus the PAS' 'Islamic struggle', was regarded to be another source of potential problems, given that usually, PAS' argument for its moral integrity is the long-term Islamic education (*tarbiyah*) experienced by its members, something that the DHPP members naturally could not have. In a similar vein, during my fieldwork some PAS members demanded that DHPP members be exposed to proper missionary education (*dakwah*) so they could better understand what they were actually supporting. Ideally, DHPP members would finally receive 'enlightenment' (*hidayah*) from Allah and become Muslims. Such patriarchal rhetoric has the potential to annoy some DHPP members in the long term, and may encourage them to change their mind. From my conversations with a handful of DHPP members, it seems that they joined PAS not because of a particular interest in Islam, but rather due to pragmatic political considerations. Given the constitutional guarantee of Malay Supremacy, many non-Muslims feel obliged to choose between either PAS or UMNO as the leading Malay government party. This choice means deciding between first a paradigm of institutionalized non-Malay inferiority (UMNO), or second an Islamist paradigm, which argues for non-ethnically defined Islamic Supremacy and 'protected non-Muslim minorities' (PAS). Leaving aside the contents of their beliefs, the proponents of the latter option are perceived by several non-Muslims as being more honest and less corrupt than UMNO. The traditional ethnic BN-component parties MIC and MCA, in contrast, are widely perceived to be corrupted, powerless 'proxies' of UMNO, supporting whatever UMNO dictates in order to fill their own pockets. Accordingly, many believe that a vote for them translates into a vote for UMNO. Furthermore, given that UMNO is increasingly seen to have become 'more Islamist' (Liow 2009: 184)

than PAS, and PAS condemns the prevalent chauvinistic racism (*'asabiyah'*), subsequently, for a number of non-Muslims, the Islamic Party is increasingly viewed to be a promising—or comparably less worrying—alternative. Some argue that, at least, it could not become worse for them anyway, sometimes expressed by the popular slogan 'Anything but UMNO' (or *Asalkan Bukan UMNO, ABU*). PAS' opening toward non-Muslims therefore raises hopes among several non-Malays for a relatively better future.

Balendran Balasubramaniam told me that he is a committed Hindu, with no interest in becoming Muslim. Instead, his explanation for joining DHPP was that while non-Malays were not secure under a BN government and could never trust UMNO, in contrast PAS was trustworthy. In his view, unlike UMNO, PAS members had a high degree of morality, as they were truly convinced of their proclaimed standpoints. Furthermore, they were afraid of God's punishment and would therefore always stick to their promises. For him, the status of a 'protected minority' under Islamic rule, with 'reliable conditions' was more promising than the 'insecure' situation under a racist–chauvinist UMNO rule and its obedient non-Malay 'proxies' in Barisan Nasional. Balendran Balasubramaniam strongly emphasized that everybody should remain with his own religion. He also argued that even though interreligious marriage was not forbidden for Hindus, he was against it, as mixing religions would 'always create problems'. He, and another non-Muslim PAS supporter that I spoke with (interview with Teoh\*, Jerteh, 18 February 2010), imagined that a person who sincerely followed his or her religion was a good person. As PAS leaders followed their religion but the 'corrupt' UMNO 'racists' supposedly did not, this was sufficient reason to support PAS, the only Malay party that has the potential to replace UMNO. Furthermore, Teoh\* argued that PAS has a much less dubious reputation than PKR, which consists of several ex-UMNO members and is led by the political flip-flopper Anwar Ibrahim. Decades-long experiences of institutionalized disadvantage throughout the history of UMNO rule, which systematically discriminates against non-Malays in manifold ways, can therefore be seen as the main source of both non-Malay political frustration and the previously unimaginable phenomenon of non-Muslim support for PAS.

However, there are initial signs that the DHPP's position will not remain limited to unconditional loyalty. In 2012, the DHPP leader Hu Pang Chaw protested against the PAS state government of Kelantan for enforcing Islamic Law and moral policing on non-Muslims. PAS had previously announced a ban for non-Muslim hair salon workers to cut the hair of members of the opposite sex (*The Star*, 18 December 2012), and had also arrested non-Muslims for other forms of 'immoral behavior' in a number of cases. When Hu Pang Chaw brought these cases to the attention of the media, the PAS Kelantan state executive councilor Takiyuddin Hassan accused Hu Pang Chaw of having 'bad intentions', and reminded him that the DHPP 'should play its role as part of the party' (*The Star*, 18 December 2012). Another prominent PAS conservative, Tuan Ibrahim Tuan Man, criticized Hu Pang Chaw when



the latter made public statements that PAS should be sincere with non-Muslims on its belief that it is a religious duty to implement *hudud* laws (*The Malaysian Insider*, 13 October 2011). Hu Pang Chaw had on other occasions even expressed his support for the implementation of *hudud* laws, if applicable for Muslims only), and declared that PAS should not compromise on Islamic Law and the constitutional status of Malays (*New Straits Times*, 19 February 2013). Nevertheless, many PAS members continue to perceive him as a suspicious 'infidel' who does not belong to the Islamic kinship community of trustworthy 'brothers'.

Competing PAS factions disagree over the status that DHPP members should enjoy. When the reformist Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad suggested in 2012 that PAS should consider allocating one of the senior party posts to a non-Muslim, the head of the structurally authoritative Ulama Wing, Harun Taib, immediately intervened, insisting that Dzulkefly's personal opinion had nothing to do with the party's position, and that the DHPP member would need to convert to Islam first (*Malaysiakini*, 1 March 2012). The Ulama Wing's position was supported by the PAS Youth, which declared that the PAS leadership must consist of Muslims only (*Malaysiakini*, 1 March 2012). Dzulkefly's position, in turn, remains marginal.

There is also a relatively new phenomenon of non-Muslims who are voting for PAS but do not belong to DHPP. Some mainly do so in order to vote against the alternative (usually UMNO/BN), whereas others have sympathy for the candidate. I met Teoh\*, a non-Muslim PAS voter who later joined the DHPP at his house in Jerteh, Terengganu. He was fully convinced that PAS was the best party to safeguard his interests. A member from the local PAS branch suggested that I visit this ethnic Chinese man, whom he half-jokingly referred to as 'one of our hardcore supporters'. Teoh\* emotionally explained his anger towards the BN government. Known for vocally opposing BN, his house had once been attacked by a brick stone that was thrown through his window. He was sure that this was a warning from UMNO. PAS, he argued, were reliable friends, who sincerely cared for everybody, including the non-Malays and non-Muslims (interview with Teoh\*, Jerteh, 18 February 2010).

Given that several non-Muslims support PAS or even become PAS members, the long-held mainstream perception according to which PAS' vision of Islamic rule was not acceptable for non-Muslim citizens (Kreuzer 2001: 61) seems to have lost some of its validity. For non-Muslims like Balendran Balasubramaniam and other DHPP members PAS' Islamist vision for a political order in which non-Muslims are granted minority rights under Islamic Law is not only acceptable, but is even worthy of active support. On the other hand, it remains true that while PAS' aspirations for state-political Islamization mainly target Muslims who ought to be subject to divine law, de facto, both Muslims and non-Muslims have a fixed position and legal status in this envisioned system (Kreuzer 2001: 46–47). Consequently, individual freedom for choosing social identity is neglected. This, for example, was demonstrated by laws implemented by PAS in 2000 in Terengganu, which oblige companies

and institutions, including those led by non-Muslims, to ensure that female Muslim employees wear a headscarf (*tudung*). Although such obligatory rules are disputed by many ‘moderates’ within PAS, and PAS Terengganu is particularly conservative, it is anything but clear how PAS would legally behave toward non-Muslims once it became a dominant national government party, and which sub-grouping within PAS would dominate the respective discourse. Nevertheless, for the time being, as exemplified by PAS’ recent coalition behavior and the foundation of DHPP, the trend points toward strategic moderation and a relative opening.

PAS’ current approach to non-Muslims is becoming increasingly ‘inclusivist’, but it is based on an Islamist conception of inclusion—Muslims are superior, non-Muslims do not have equal rights. All non-Muslims who accept Islamic Supremacy and their designated role of a protected minority with an inferior legal status are included. If they disagree, PAS members will likely blame it on a supposed lack of understanding of Islam and opt for ‘better explanation’. Accordingly, non-Muslims who reject a structurally lower—but in PAS’ definition ‘just’—legal status are excluded and are incompatible with PAS’ vision for a ‘just’ multi-religious Islamic order. In any case, a ‘friendly’ treatment, vis-à-vis an Islamist rejection of unconditional equality before the law, or allowing non-Muslims to join PAS but denying them equal membership rights, should not be confused with post-Islamist pluralism.

In sum, given the need to achieve non-Muslim acceptance in order to gain power, PAS has chosen a substantially new approach toward the non-Muslim population of Malaysia. In this process, elites from the PAS Youth have played their traditional role as an innovative and daring agent of change and pioneered this significant transformation. It remains to be seen, however, whether PAS will go further and allow non-Muslims more substantial forms of participation, or even abandon the foundational Islamist conviction that, according to a particular interpretation of Islamic Law, non-Muslims must necessarily be inferior legal subjects.

### ***Islamic authority and internal factions: the privileged role of ulama in PAS***

As Zainah Anwar (2005: 126) points out, the question ‘of who has a right to speak on Islam is a major contentious issue in Malaysia today’, while most Malay Muslims ‘believe that only the *ulama* have the right to speak on Islam’. The PAS Constitution (2009, Clause 43 [2]) defines that anyone who holds a degree in Islamic Studies from an institute of higher learning (university or university college) or a higher Islamic school belongs to that category. This conceptualization of what constitutes *ulama* reflects the general understanding of the term in Malaysia, whereas Islamically ‘self-educated’ Muslims and even Islamist activists who underwent intense PAS *tarbiyah* for decades but do not hold respective degrees are excluded from the category and the authoritative rights that go along with it. Within the larger society, and even more within PAS, there are very few non-*ulama* who ‘have the courage to

question, challenge or even discuss matters of religion', being 'socialized to accept that those in religious authority know best what is Islamic and what not' (Anwar 2005: 126).

In fact, a number of non-PAS-related Malays whom I spoke with stated that they did not have the necessary knowledge or education to say something about Islam and advised me to speak with *ulama*, thus rejecting the possibility of individual interpretation of religious matters by 'average' Muslims. On the other hand, Zainah Anwar's (2005: 126–27) observation that 'if one supports the death penalty for apostasy, the *hudud* law, and the Islamic state, then one will enjoy the freedom and space to speak on Islam', remains valid.

Within PAS, the *ulama*'s monopoly on the interpretation of Islam has been institutionalized through the Ulama Leadership doctrine. Only *ulama* are allowed to lead the party; the posts of Spiritual Leader and President, as well as membership in the decisive Syura Council are exclusively reserved for *ulama* since the Young Turk's takeover in 1982. Kamaruzaman Mohamad, a non-*ulama* key leader in the PAS Youth, explained to me why in his view the *ulama* must play this exclusive role in PAS: 'Our target is *Allah*'s love. So, how to get *Allah*'s love? Only *ulama* know how.' He further stated:

We support them (*ulama*). Whatever they ask us, we will execute. So, on the management side, we (PAS Youth) are the wing, we are the group that will try our best to maintain this (Ulama Leadership), without sidelining the non-*ulama*. Because all of our members are sharing the same objective. Whether you are *ulama*, whether you are non-*ulama*. If you are good, even if you are not *ulama*, you could be chosen as Executive Central Committee members. So that is our principle.

(Interview with Kamaruzaman Mohamad, Kuala Lumpur,  
18 December 2009)

With this statement, Kamaruzaman Mohamad expressed the PAS Youth's currently nearly undivided loyalty toward the organizational normative principle of Ulama Leadership. Indeed, while controversies, disputes, factionalism and emotional differences of opinions can be observed within PAS (like in any other political organization), they rarely touch upon the sacrosanct, discursively naturalized principle of Ulama Leadership.

However, in an informal talk, another non-*ulama* PAS member questioned whether any young person holding a B.A. degree in Islamic Studies necessarily had better knowledge of Islam (and was thus superior to make decisions) compared to a non-*ulama* who is active in the party for 40 years and has extensively taken part in the Islamic movement and its internal education (*tarbiyah*). Nevertheless, such criticisms usually do not pass judgment on the Ulama Leadership principle or the superiority of *ulama* as such. Rather, they problematize the definition of who precisely should be regarded a knowledgeable scholar of Islam (*ulama*).

As a staunch defender of Ulama Leadership, Nik Muhammad Zawawi Nik Salleh, the Information Chief of the Ulama Wing and Secretary General of the Syura Council, explained to me that while PAS worked 'as a collective' (*secara kolektif*), 'ulama must be superior' (*yang atas itu mesti ulama*) (interview with Ustaz Nik Muhammad Zawawi Nik Salleh, Besut, 17 February 2010). He also stressed that only *ulama* were qualified to become PAS president or, if PAS ruled Malaysia, prime minister. Lower posts, including chief ministers (*menteri besar*) on the state level, however, were open to non-*ulama*. In contrast, another PAS leader, Datuk Yahayha\*, informally told me that personally he would even accept a morally upright non-Muslim prime minister, although he was aware that PAS as a whole would certainly not agree.

In 2011, the earlier-mentioned Mohamad Sabu became the first non-*ulama* PAS Deputy President (*timbangan presiden*) since more than two decades, sparking party-internal and public debates about whether this was permissible under Ulama Leadership. Mohamad Sabu reacted by pointing out that Ulama Leadership was assured through the Syura Council and the party president's *ulama* status. Contradicting the general view of Ulama Leadership according to which the PAS president must come from the *ulama*, PAS President Abdul Hadi Awang (quoted in *Malaysiakini*, 4 June 2011) himself even argued after a dramatic loss of the *ulama* faction at the PAS-internal elections of 2011 that under Ulama Leadership it was not *per se* 'impossible for a non-*ulama* person to be elected president if it fits the circumstances of the time, as the party constitution does not have such a restriction'. For the first time since the 1980s, made possible through this top-down statement as well as the bottom-up internal PAS election results in 2011, a partial re-interpretation of the meaning of Ulama Leadership became a realistic possibility.

Although emic suggestions about overcoming the *ulama*/non-*ulama* (or *ulama*/professional) divide are rare, with most simply defending the *status quo* and stressing the alleged unity and harmony between both camps, one unconventional and to some extent normatively transgressive view was uttered by a non-*ulama* key figure from the PAS Youth, Mohd Aziz Daud\* (interview with Mohd Aziz Daud\*, Kuala Lumpur, January 2010). He admitted to me that 'there are issues related to PAS elections during the General Assembly, they assume that PAS has a professional group and *ulama*. I think we cannot deny this.' Mohd Aziz Daud\* then drew on comparisons with Islamic movements abroad to suggest a solution; the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood (Ikhwanul Muslimin) and the Lebanese Hezbollah 'don't have the split' because Islamically qualified leaders without degrees in Islamic Studies could also be considered '*ulama*'. 'Those qualified as leader they can consider *ulama*', whereas regrettably, 'in PAS we don't have such spirit', as 'those who have not graduated from religious disciplines, even though their knowledge of Islam is very good, they are not considered *ulama*'. As an example, he named the Muslim Brotherhood's Former Spiritual Leader (*murshid 'am*), Mustafa Mashhur (tenure 1996–2002), who held a degree in physics, whereas in PAS the spiritual leader must have obtained higher-level education

in Islamic Studies. While not questioning the principle as such, in drawing this comparison, the PAS Youth functionary formulated a constructive criticism toward a re-interpretation of the meaning of Ulama Leadership in line with the practices of Islamist ‘brother’-organizations abroad. Furthermore, Mohd Aziz Daud\* expressed his hope that ‘professionals’ could also one day be considered *ulama*. Additionally, he purported that *ulama* also needed to improve their skills beyond Islamic Studies, thereby politely criticizing the status quo. Referring to PAS Youth Chief, Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi, he argued that ‘Ustaz Tantawi’ was an excellent future PAS leader in terms of Islamic knowledge, adding that ‘in terms of appearance he almost looks like our President Tuan Guru Hadi’. However, he also stated that ideally Ustaz Tantawi should:

Instead of looking at religious aspects ... also look at related current issues in economics, politics and globalization. I think that is what we need in the future. So hopefully he can combine religion with economics and other non-religious disciplines to be a PAS future leader.

(Interview with Mohd Aziz Daud\*, Kuala Lumpur, January 2010)

The ‘ultra-conservative’ (Liow and Mohamad Osman 2007: 1) *ulama* Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi is open to such suggestions. Soon after his appointment as Youth chief, he himself argued in favor of ‘making professionals become *ulama* and *ulama* become professionals’ (*mengulamakkan golongan profesional dan memprofesionalkan ulama*’, see PAS Muktamar 2011 Homepage 2011a). It remains to be seen whether this ambitious goal will succeed in his own case, as well as in many others. Presently, the gap remains and the goal is far from being achieved, as Tantawi’s formulation of an *ought* as opposed to an *is* condition implicitly underlines.

It can be concluded that the privileged position of *ulama* in PAS, as enshrined in the widely supported normative order of Ulama Leadership, is here to stay. The more contested question, however, is whether PAS’ definition of *ulama* should be preserved or changed, and what Ulama Leadership means beyond having an authoritative Syura Council. Here, fresh transformative ideas from some sections of the PAS Youth Wing are emerging, at least behind the scenes of public and official talk.

### ***Young ulama within the PAS Youth***

Within the PAS Ulama Wing, there is a sub-section, Young Ulama (Ulama Muda), which is structurally separate from the PAS Youth. Generally, young *ulama* are active in either the Youth Wing or the Ulama Wing. Many of those who hold degrees from universities in the Middle East or domestic Islamic Studies programs choose to enter the Ulama Wing. Others, including high-profile graduates from Egypt, such as Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi, Azman Shapawi, Nik Mohamad Abduh and dozens of influential young *ulama*

prefer to be involved in the party as theologically authoritative elite in the PAS Youth.

The previous two PAS Youth chiefs, Mahfuz Omar (1999–2003) and Salahuddin Ayub (2003–9), were not *ulama*, but were emically categorized as ‘activists’ (*aktivis*), and framed much of their actions in a comparably more ‘worldly’ rhetoric. In contrast, the current leader, Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi (2009–) is an Al-Azhar-trained and Salafi-inspired dogmatic religious scholar. His publications and speeches rarely leave his familiar terrain of theology-centered argumentation and rhetoric, in which he is a highly distinguished expert. Apparently many PAS Youth members, especially on leadership levels, *ulama* and non-*ulama* alike, are thoroughly happy about the situation where there is an *ulama*-led youth wing, given that a Middle Eastern-trained religious scholar is seen to be the most competent person to ensure the PAS Youth’s conformity with ‘true Islam’ and understanding of God’s will. However, the PAS Youth member Umar\* shared in an informal conversation his criticism that ‘for the *ulama* we already have an Ulama Wing, but this is Dewan Pemuda, not Dewan Ulama!’ (informal conversation with Umar\*, Kuala Lumpur, February 2010). Cautious criticism was also uttered by others, particularly when comparing the current leadership of Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi to Salahuddin Ayub’s tenure, the latter being a rhetorically highly skilled populist who, according to some PAS members, was more ‘accessible’ for the greater public. Generally, most people with whom I talked about ‘Ustaz Tantawi’s’ leadership added—in a strikingly uniform way—that Tantawi needed ‘more time’ and ‘needs to learn’.

A recently retired PAS Youth leader of a Malaysian state, Mohamad Raslan\*, himself a Middle Eastern-trained religious scholar who chose to engage in the Youth Wing, self-critically argued that *ulama* tend to ‘talk in one language’, whereas the ‘tradition’ of the PAS Youth was ‘different’:

These graduates from the Middle East, Arab Universities, they are more involved in the Ulama Wing compared with the PAS Youth. In the PAS Youth, the tradition is different. You are youth, came from many backgrounds, diverse in thoughts and so on. Ulama like to talk in one language. ... We (the PAS Youth) have a few (*ulama* who studied in the Middle East). Now (the PAS Youth Chief) Ustaz Nasrudin Tantawi.

(Interview with Ustaz Mohamad Raslan\*, Ipoh, January 2010)

Indeed, an overly *ulama*-centered Youth Wing, which speaks ‘*ulama*-language’, wears *ulama*-dress and thinks rarely beyond the typical PAS *ulama* paradigm, is likely to fail to attract larger numbers of Malaysian youth who do not yet support the Islamic Party. From the perspective of many ‘average’ young Malays, these Middle Eastern-trained *ulama*, often wearing white robes (*jubah*) and sometimes turbans (*serban*), appear less approachable. This has been understood by an increasing number of PAS Youth activists, including its leadership and a number of young *ulama* who seek to bridge that gap by

systematically exposing the *ulama* to non-Islamic Studies-related knowledge and social realities beyond their theological ivory tower (see Chapter 4). While the normative question of which role *ulama* ideally *should* play in the PAS Youth is to some extent internally contested, the status quo is that *ulama* represent the most influential elite and occupy many key positions on the national and state levels. The Middle Eastern-trained young *ulama* in the PAS Youth are the most respected authorities, and there is no culture of openly criticizing such authorities within PAS, with its very hierarchical, loyalty-oriented, and *ulama*-venerating current outlook. Constructively assisting them from below and suggesting innovative instrumental approaches to exert a more effective political communication and missionary work (*dakwah*), however, is common and warmly welcomed by the PAS Youth's *ulama* elites.

***Diversity and internal contestation: 'ulama', 'professionals' and 'activists', or 'Erdogans' and 'Erbakans'?***

Discussions about different groupings within PAS often revolve around factional categories of *ulama*, 'professionals' (*profesional*) and 'activists' (*aktivis*), local groupings (e.g. PAS Kelantan, Geng Terengganu), or the two opposing factions of pragmatic Erdogans and uncompromising Erbakans. To do justice to the actors' perspectives, it cannot be emphasized enough that such categories are problematic, and that the latter two terms (Erbakans/Erdogans) are univocally rejected by those labeled as such. On the other hand, most PAS members are well-aware who is meant by the terms and indeed both have been used by some PAS members themselves since 2008.

During the last few years, the Erdogan-labeled camp was at the forefront of pushing forward the coalition agenda, despite sharp resistance among orthodox 'conservatives' (mostly but not exclusively *ulama*), which have been labeled as Erbakans. These two terms are derived from the history of Islamic politics in Turkey, where the Refah party's Necmettin Erbakan stood for a more dogmatist stance and the wish to introduce strict Islamic legislations, whereas the current prime minister and AKP (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi) leader, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, is seen to be much more pragmatic, compromise-willing or even 'post-Islamist'. PAS President, Abdul Hadi Awang, himself commonly labeled by local (mostly UMNO-controlled) media to belong to PAS' Erbakan camp (but explicitly denying the categories' applicability for Malaysia, see PAS Muktamar 2011 Homepage 2011c), even called Turkey's AKP a 'purely secular' party (Abdul Hadi Awang, quoted in *Malaysiakini*, 5 June 2011). While other PAS members, including *ulama*, have more sympathies for the AKP, Abdul Hadi Awang's statement ironically illustrates why some observers refer to him as an Erbakan, as one who is substantially opposed to Recep Tayyip Erdogan's style of pragmatic Islamic politics.

The more liberal PAS reformists (Erdogans) defend compromise for the sake of Pakatan Rakyat's success, which they regard to be necessary to gain

power and realize a better state and society. Shortly before the PAS General Assembly in 2011, one of their most prominent representatives publicly expressed their unhappiness with the label Erdogan, and suggested their stance to be called *properubahan* (pro-change) instead (*SiasahDaily*, 27 May 2011), with Khalid Samad, Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad, and Dr Mujahid Yusof being among their most prominent faces. The conservatives (or Erbakans), on the contrary, have the image—which they deny—of being deeply skeptical of both coalition partners, PKR and particularly the non-Muslim secularist DAP. Their core position is best summarized by the following statement by a leader of the Kedah PAS' Ulama Wing, which was uttered in response to a reformist book written by the *properubahan*/Erdogan, Dr Mujahid Yusof Rawa (2010):

It must be remembered that the goal of the struggle of PAS is not to come into power, but to emphasize God's laws. There is no use to go to Putrajaya (the Malaysian government district) if the basis (*asas*) of PAS' struggle becomes eroded.

(Ustaz Yusuf Mahmud, quoted in *The Malaysian Insider*, 29 December 2010, author's translation)

These conservatives consist mostly, but not exclusively, of *ulama* associated with theology-centered and hardline Islamist legalist thinking, being at times much more concerned with the afterlife and clear-cut battles between Islam and satanic evil rather than realistic worldly politics. For them, too much compromise on matters pertaining to 'God's law' is nothing less than a betrayal to the 'basis of the Islamic struggle' (*asas perjuangan Islam*), a central key term with highest normative priority within this camp. Orthodox *ulama*, such as Abdul Hadi Awang, Dr Harun Din, and the PAS Youth key leaders, Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi, Azman Shapawi, Nik Mohamad Abduh and Kamaruzaman Mohamad, can be associated with PAS' dogmatic faction, irrespective of how it is labelled. Nevertheless, this group also strongly rejects the Erdogan/Erbakan terminology, or any attempts to differentiate factions within PAS. Although there is a significant number of pragmatists in senior positions, and some of those who had once been ultra-orthodox have now softened their approach on particular issues (for example, Nik Aziz who nevertheless still publicly insists on the immediate implementation of *hudud* and *qisas*), the reformists (*properubahan*) do not enjoy substantial support from the Youth Wing, which is led and widely dominated by anti-pragmatist hardliners.<sup>18</sup>

While a tendency can be seen that Erdogan-labeled persons are linked to Kelantan and Erbakans to Terengganu, such a view would be too simplistic; the general problem, religio-political dogmatism versus pragmatic realpolitik, greatly transcends regional factions or the dichotomy between the—themselves heterogeneous—'PAS Kelantan' and 'PAS Terengganu'. The borders between the camps are overlapping and flexible depending on the issue at stake.



Indeed, as Welsh (2011, no page) rightly argues, ‘the battle lines are’ often ‘more cross-cutting’, as ‘there is much more going on than a simple divide as PAS is struggling to find itself’. According to her (with reference to the PAS General Assembly in 2011):

(T)he most important cliques are regional. Terengganu is facing off against Kelantan openly, as each of the states is lobbying actively. It is not uncommon for different states to seek representation and leadership. But what distinguishes the regional contestation this round is its close ties with other cleavages in the campaign. Terengganu is seen to be allied with the more conservative groups, while Kelantan is seen to encourage more diversity and progressive views. A closer look suggests that even within these states, there are divisions. In fact, in the three traditional core PAS states—Terengganu (sic), Kelantan and Kedah—there are sharp divisions, thus empowering the western and southern states to decide the party’s fate, especially Selangor, Perak and Negeri Sembilan.

(Welsh 2011: no page)

Some so-called Erbakans are often said to be in favor of forming a Muslim Malay Unity Government (UG) with UMNO, or alternatively with all parties, including UMNO, under a National Unity Government (Kerajaan Perpaduan Nasional), so that they could ‘educate’ UMNO without hostilities and bring it back on the right path. In 2009, several members still openly argued this stance (see Baqi 2009) and behind-the-scenes negotiations with UMNO took place, led by PAS President Abdul Hadi Awang, then Deputy President Nasharudin Mat Isa and Secretary General Mustafa Ali (cf. Wikileaks, 30 July 2008). However since then, the pro-‘UG’ stance has become taboo in public discussions after Nik Aziz intervened with full force in 2010 and almost succeeded in calling for an Extraordinary General Assembly, which took place in a downgraded form as a ‘seminar’, held in Gombak, attended by the author. From then on, it was officially declared that PAS rejects any political coalition with UMNO, except cooperation on ‘religious’ questions, Palestine, and other such ‘issue-based’ politics. Accordingly, as per the party’s sanction-based principle of loyalty to official decisions, PAS members are no longer allowed to disagree with this official rejection in public, unless a new stance is declared by the leadership.

Despite the fact that the PAS-internal use of the Turkish labels has declined since 2009 (although the term Erdogan reappeared in the wake of the General Assembly 2011,<sup>19</sup> even forcing Abdul Hadi Awang to address it and deny its applicability, see *Malaysiakini*, 5 June 2011), the different groups continue to disagree. However, a large portion of contestation occurs in subtle forms or behind the scenes of public discourse, where typically most of PAS’ conflictive negotiations are taking place. What becomes public is thereby often seen as an accident or norm-transgression, rather than the product of a healthy culture of open political deliberative discourse.

Many PAS members downplay internal conflicts especially when they talk to outsiders, and deny the implications that the terms Erdogan and Erbakan have. Some have argued in our conversations that the terms (and any other factional categories) were created 'by our enemies to split us'. Nevertheless, it is clear that since the *reformasi* movement in 1998–99, PAS' internal contestations over which direction the party should take have largely been shaped by a conflict between more compromise-willing pragmatists (or 'post-Islamists', as two PAS journalists themselves called them, see Johari 2011; Zalkapli 2011) and legalist hardliners. The Erdogan-labeled Hatta Ramli exemplarily formulated his 'thinking group's' position as follows:

When you start talking about forming coalition, then this problem will definitely come. Because some people agree and some don't. And, so, you tend to form your own thinking groups. And when you are in Pakatan Rakyat, in order to achieve, you have to take part to make it work. But some people don't agree, because we are seen as sacrificing some of our principles, bigger ideals. ... We (the pragmatists/reformists) think that if you cannot win all, maybe you do not lose all, and if we win something in between, that's what working with other people means. Everybody changes off some of their ideas, for a common cause. I don't think DAP will get everything they want, or PKR. But that is the basis of working together. For assuring a forward move, you have to compromise a bit. And that one should be understood by everybody if you want to move forward. And we have already moved forward. ... You cannot only be pushing your own agenda, it is either this or not, no! ... especially people who don't feel the responsibility to push forward an alternative agenda. That's why the issue of going backward, talking with UMNO, came about. Because they (the dogmatists) don't want to change.

(Interview with Hatta Ramli, Kuala Lumpur, 17 November 2009)

However, the counter-position to this pragmatist stance is diverse as well. In his keynote speech (*Ucapan Tema*) at the PAS Youth General Assembly in 2011, the ultra-orthodox Youth Chief Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi (2011b: 41) admitted that there were people who see the PR-coalition as 'un-Islamic' (*tidak islamik*). Despite being anything but a *properubahan*-camp supporter, he himself defends the coalition in Islamic terms as a form of *tahaluf siyasi* (a permissible political coalition, as exemplified by the Prophet who forged strategic coalitions with non-Muslims), thus repeating the party's current official stance, as defined by the party's *ulama* elders.

A leading PAS Youth functionary, Ibrahim Mutalib\*, himself a professional who was described by one of his colleagues as 'not an *ulama* but *ulama*-minded', provided a definition of what people *falsely* think Erdogans and Erbakans mean, outlining 'Erdogan is from professional side, some of them lawyers, doctors and engineers. Another group, they call Erbakan (comes) from Islamic studies' (interview with Ibrahim Mutalib\*, Kuala Lumpur,

December 2009). He admitted that these ideas exist, but strongly emphasized that these 'wrong categories' were created by 'enemies':

Turkey is very different. ... The terms Erdogan/Erbakan are created by our enemy. They are trying to divide our unity. ... But the term is wrong! Because the persons whom they associate with the terms are various. Even from the, they say Erbakan, there are so many engineers. And from the Erdogan, there are also from Islamic background. ... Sincerely I think there is no Erdogan Erbakan. But, there is a difference of opinion. ... Prophet Muhammad said the difference of opinion is a *rahmah* (mercy). Because, if I have the same opinion with you, there will be no better things. ... What our enemy is doing now, they exaggerate. They really highlight the difference of opinion. In Islam we have *adab al-Ikhtilaf*, *adab-adab berbeza pandangan* (good manners and norms for having different opinions/Islamic culture of debate). We can have different opinions, but when it becomes a decision, we have to commit to the decision. Let's say during the meeting, I agree A, you agree B. And the decision said A. So you must commit to A. If the decision is B, I have to commit to B. When I go outside, ... I will say: 'B is good!' That is *adab al-Ikhtilaf*. ... So that is only our enemy's role to divide the unity of PAS. ... We have been trained, if our opinion was rejected, we should say *Alhamdulillah* (praise to God). If our opinion is accepted, we should say *Astaghfirullah* (I seek Allah's forgiveness)!

(Interview with Ibrahim Mutalib\*, Kuala Lumpur, December 2009)

Similarly, the PAS Youth Executive Central Committee member Mohd Aziz Daud\* externalized the terms Erdogan and Erbakan as the inventions of outsiders. Both statements, when taken together, indicate this broad emic tendency:

(The categories) have been formed by the people from outside ... I cannot see the situation which was mentioned in the media, or by other people outside of the party, but when we were still talking about it, Erbakan and Erdogan, these groups suddenly, appeared. ... But actually it is not true as what the people outside said. But then, not the top leaders, but state or district branches (*kawasan*) say 'these people are Erdogan' and 'these are Erbakan'. ... But I think it is not a big matter.

(Interview with Mohd Aziz Daud\*, Kuala Lumpur, January 2010)

The claim that the terms were created by outsiders stands in contrast to a PAS journalist's statement according to which they were first used by PAS insiders on a dubious weblog that attacked PAS Erdogan Husam Musa, accusing him of being a DAP-*kafir*-friend (Anti-Husam Weblog 2008, see also Zalkapli 2010c: 70).<sup>20</sup> Later, the labels were more widely popularized at the PAS General Assemblies in 2008 and 2009. As a committed PAS member, this

journalist is certainly not an ‘enemy of PAS’, and he justified the terms’ analytical value for describing competing de facto existing divisions within PAS. He highlighted ‘an open contestation between the Erdogans’ in favor of supporting Anwar Ibrahim as a potential candidate for prime minister ‘and the *ulama* faction led by the president, Abdul Hadi Awang’, that took place between 2008 and 2010. The critical PAS journalist further summarized:

The term Erdogan ... in PAS was first used by the anonymous blog ... which appears to have received information or run by PAS insiders ... The name Erdogan describes a more liberal approach in politics, a new face of the Islamic party as opposed to the old ways of the Refah Party lead (sic) by Necmettin Erbakan. Some used the term Erbakan in describing (sic) the *ulama* group. ... Those seen as part of the Erdogan faction include ... Dr. Dzulkifly Ahmad, Husam Musa, Dr. Syed Azman Syed Ahmad, Dr. Hatta Ramli, Dr. Lo’lo’ Ghazali, and Dr. Mariah Mahmud. The *ulama* group includes ... Abdul Hadi Awang, Nasharudin Mat Isa, Dr. Hassan Ali, and Harun Taib.

(Zalkapli 2010c: 76–77)

Although there are also differences in the PAS Youth, its national leadership tends to purport a legalistic–purist outlook, especially on matters pertaining to state organization. However, the Islamic norms requiring ‘well-mannered criticism’ (*adab al-Ikhtilaf*), forbid making party-internal differences of opinions public. Informally speaking, however, Ibrahim Mutalib\*, a prominent PAS Youth official, stated, ‘if only we see that they (senior leaders) are already away from the basis/foundation (*asas*), we will make them come back on track’ (interview with Ibrahim Mutalib\*, Kuala Lumpur, December 2009). In contrast, Muhammad Hafiz Musa, a PAS Youth functionary from Kelantan and son of the Erdogan-labeled PAS politician Husam Musa, rejected claims that the Erdogans were deviating from the ‘basis of the Islamic struggle’. Instead, he claimed that they had actually defended it:

The accusation, ... that those labeled Erdogans left the fundamentals of PAS’ struggle, has no basis. Actually, they had protected PAS from working together with UMNO. Therefore the accusation is not logic, has no basis. The accusations are only used to make those labeled Erdogans have a lowered perception in the PAS community and not to be accepted as leaders. The labeling as Erdogan and Erbakan should not happen anyway, just as the efforts to form a Unity Government with UMNO should not happen.

(Interview with Muhammad Hafiz Musa, Kota Bharu,  
23 February 2010, author’s translation)

Such internal differences demonstrate the—at times—conflictive contestedness and diversity of inner life in both PAS and its Youth Wing. To outsiders, members of any camp will emphasize party-internal unity. The constitutive

outside Other is constructed as the enemy who caused, or with bad intentions falsely claimed, inner conflicts existing within PAS. In reality, as exemplified by the earlier described disputes, constant negotiations take place with regard to ideal political paths and the very nature of the collective Self. This is especially visible below the surface of official public behavior.

Undoubtedly, organizational cultures, practices and ideologies—including Islamist ones—are never entirely stable and are subject to constant (re-)contestation and contingent transformation. However, the negotiable flexibility of PAS' collective Self has its boundaries. The instrumental approaches and strategies may change, but much of the *asas perjuangan Islam* remains trans-factionally unquestioned as a general normative conviction. This includes the role of Islamic Law as the most superior source of normativity, and the firm intention to make Malaysia a 'truly Islamic' state and society on all levels of private and public life in a 'complete' manner in the future.

Nevertheless, the space within the boundaries of this discursive framework allows a great deal of diversity and disagreement, as exemplified by the contestations between the dogmatic idealists and pragmatic reformists, and even within the dogmatist camp some heterogeneity remains (e.g. 'Pakatan Rakyat with DAP is un-Islamic' vs. 'Pakatan Rakyat does Islamic *tahaluf siyasi*'). Such struggles are linked with one emically regularly denied subtext, the conflictive quest for hegemony and power within the party. Furthermore, many PAS leaders cannot be associated with either pole, as they stand—at times selectively—in between, both in terms of personal ties as well as political viewpoints. Some of those who are at the forefront of campaigning and demonstrations, but are not *ulama* or 'professionals' such as Mohamad Sabu and Salahuddin Ayub, are emically categorized 'activists', due to their active role in campaigns and demonstrations. Sometimes people also change camps. The prominent PAS politician, Nasharudin Mat Isa, who once was claimed to be the ideal typical representative of the 'new PAS', a 'new breed of clerics with a reformist image—the "young *Ulama*"' (Kassim 2009: 172), soon afterwards was seen as the personification of an Erbakan-labeled stance (both in terms of being 'pro-Unity Government' and skeptical of compromise in Pakatan Rakyat vis-à-vis Islamic Law). Noticeably, these categories, as well as personal positions, are potentially, but not necessarily, fluid. Developments that create meaning can be transitory and quickly changing. This proves that assumptions about an alleged monolithic 'Islamist stance' are flawed, and that the discursively contested collective actor PAS is substantially dynamic and multi-vocal. At the same time, the two poles of debate, Islamist dogmatism and realpolitik-oriented pragmatism, continue to cause substantial controversies and factionalism within the party.

### *Islamic State, Caring State, Caliphate?*

This section will analyze the at times highly emotional negotiations pertaining to the frequently declared 'target of an Islamic State' (*matlamat Daulah*

*Islamiyyah*, quoted from the PAS anthem) within PAS itself, and how it should be pursued. The goal of an Islamic State was declared by PAS as early as 1951 (Funston 1980: 90). However, at that time the term did not have political priority over more urgent matters, and was also internally disputed. The target's rise to its current most prominent normative priority took place three decades later with the establishment of Ulama Leadership in 1982–83, fuelled by the Iranian model, and an increased focus on other Islamist movements abroad that also passionately aspired for the establishment of an Islamic State. In fact, this quest for an Islamic State is a foundational characteristic of what constitutes Islamism as a political ideology and source of identity.

Tibi (2007: 38) points out that 'Islamism is based on a politicization of Islam and its shariahtisation'. Accordingly, Islamism can, according to Liow (2009: 6), 'be defined as the ideological politicization of Islam', although, as a holistic ideology, it transcends the sphere of politics (Emmerson 2010: 146). Most Islamists believe in the famous credo, which claims that in general, and for any question, 'Islam is the solution' (*al Islam huwa al Hal*). According to the ideal-typical definition, Islamists aspire for a 'complete' implementation of what they—under contested conditions—view as 'Islamic order' organized under the Syariah law on all levels of private, public and political life. In the case of PAS, the traditionally used terms for the state order component of this vision are *Daulah Islamiyyah* and *Negara Islam*. Accordingly, the PAS Constitution (2009, Clause 6) speaks of the target to create a government and society based on Islamic laws and values.

In recent years, however, the question of terminology has become increasingly contentious. In the early 2000s, PAS was still constantly expressing its goal of an 'Islamic State'. After controversial party-internal negotiations, the party had issued two official documents which sought to explain the contents of an 'Islamic State' to the public. The first document, presented at the PAS General Assembly in 2002 by the former PAS President Fadzil Noor, was entitled 'PAS Memorandum to the Malaysian People: The Understanding of Islamic Rule in the Context of 15th Hijrah/21st Century Democracy'. It had been prepared during a deliberative process of almost two years by a number of PAS reformists, including Dzulkefley Ahmad, Kamarudin Jaffar and Husam Musa, who later became labeled as the 'Erdogans'. The PAS Memorandum upheld the goal—and wording—of an Islamic State, but strongly emphasized its compability with democracy and contemporary social realities. In line with the language of the *reformasi* movement, it referred to (polysemous) values such as justice, welfare and minority rights (Liow 2009: 84 ff.). In contrast to PAS' common image, there was little reference to hardline Islamist targets. The implementation of *hudud* laws, for example, was not mentioned at all. This can be explained by the fact that none of the powerful conservative *ulama* was involved in the drafting process (ibid.). As a consequence, the conservatives protested against 'the dilution of shari'a and hudud, on the one hand, and excessive references such as democracy on the

other' (ibid.: 87). Soon afterwards, a second Islamic State document was issued, this time drafted by hardliners among PAS' *ulama*, led by Abdul Hadi Awang.

The PAS presidency was taken over by Abdul Hadi Awang, after his much more reformist-oriented predecessor Fadzil Noor died in June 2002. At that time, PAS' appearance became more and more shaped by collective anger over the U.S. interventions on 'Muslim soil' in the Middle East (see Noor 2003). In line with this spirit, the new Islamic State Document, which was released on 12 November 2003, was a classical Islamist manifesto. It made clear that from the authoritative *ulama*'s perspective, the formation of an Islamic State, based on Syariah law, including *hudud*, is as obligatory 'as establishing the other daily rituals of Islam' (Liow 2009: 89). By defining God's will as the sole source of legitimate legislation, the document stated in no uncertain terms that '(t)he determining characteristic of an Islamic state is its total commitment and will to see that the Syariah is codified into law of the land', whereas 'man-made laws' should be rejected (PAS Homepage 2003). Furthermore, in classical Islamist manner, the PAS document demonizes any Muslim opposition against its contents as heretic.

After disappointing election results in 2004 and the collapse of the multi-religious opposition coalition Barisan Alternatif, even many conservatives among the PAS leadership realized the power-political need to change the party's 'radical' image, and attract wider clienteles also beyond PAS' traditional constituency. After a rhetorically much more moderate campaign, a relatively successful election in 2008, Barisan Alternatif was revived under the name of Pakatan Rakyat and the PAS pragmatists seemed to be gaining ground. The targets of an Islamic State and *hudud* were still mentioned by PAS leaders in public, but the degree of emphasis decreased significantly. In line with PAS' new slogan 'PAS for All' (*PAS Untuk Semua*), an alternative 'wording' for the party's state-political vision was introduced: The Caring State (*Negara Kebajikan/ Negara Berkebakjikan*).

According to PAS sources, this wording was first appropriated after a PAS delegation consisting of the reformists Hatta Ramli and Dzulkefly Ahmad visited Germany in 2006 and learned about the German concept of *Soziale Marktwirtschaft* (social market economy) with politicians, academics and students in Berlin (Zalkapli 2010c: 79; cf. Noor and Zöller 2007: 15). Step-by-step, the concept was transformatively appropriated into PAS discourse, until even the top leadership and dogmatist *ulama*, including Abdul Hadi Awang, spoke of the genuinely 'Islamic' target of a Caring State. In 2011, this wording was officially chosen as a campaigning strategy for the thirteenth General Elections.

PAS' *Negara Berkebakjikan* has been translated into Malaysia's typically anglophile public discourse as Caring State, Benevolent State and Welfare State interchangeably. However, Abdul Hadi Awang later stressed that *Negara Berkebakjikan* was *not* a Welfare State in the Western sense of the term, but was firmly rooted in 'political Islam':

‘When we introduced the “Negara Berkebajikan” concept, it is clear. Negara Kebajikan is not a welfare state; many newspapers are confused.’

(Abdul Hadi Awang, quoted in *Malaysiakini*, 15 November 2012)

Others, including the PAS Spiritual Leader Nik Abdul Aziz and the chief of the Ulama Wing, Harun Taib (quoted in *Malaysiakini*, 15 November 2012), stressed that ‘struggle to uphold hudud’ was, of course, still PAS’ Islamic cause, and an essential element of a Caring/Islamic State.<sup>21</sup> But nevertheless, Islamic penal code was not mentioned in PAS’ 80-page book on the concept of a Caring State (*Buku Konsep Negara Berkebajikan*). Similarly, there was no mentioning of *hudud* and a God-made legal order in a manifesto (*Buku Jingga*, Orange Book) that the Pakatan Rakyat component parties agreed upon at the Second Pakatan Rakyat Convention in December 2010.

Among the PAS Youth, the shift of rhetoric toward a Caring State, instead of an Islamic State, created uncertainty. Already at the PAS Youth’s General Assembly in 2008, Ustaz Zulkifli Ahmad, a popular young cleric from Selangor, aggressively shouted the following complaint:

Some say don’t mention Islamic State if we want the support of non-Muslims. ... Now, we have to talk about Caring State to the extent of some preventing President Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang from talking about Islamic State.

(Ustaz Zulkifli Ahmad, quoted in *New Straits Times*, 14 August 2008)

Clearly targeting the senior party and particularly its pragmatist faction, he added: ‘Do not deviate from our struggle as the youths are ready to pull down anyone who transgress (sic)’ (Ustaz Zulkifli Ahmad, quoted in the *The Malaysian Bar* 2008, no page).

The fragmented PAS leadership is now in the difficult position of reconciling such ‘core principles’ of the Islamic State with its new rhetoric of a Caring State. The chosen approach, apparently, is a tactical exploitation of the mass-mobilizing capacity of polysemy—meaning different things to different target audiences with the purpose of accumulating power. In his keynote address at the PAS General Assembly in 2011, Abdul Hadi Awang spoke at length about the Islamicness of a Caring State, and made only one indirect reference to the Islamic penal code (cf. *Harakah Daily*, 3 June 2011). At the same time, he stressed that ‘the justice of the Syari’ah’—in contrast to UMNO’s ‘infidel/superstitious politics’ (*khurafat politik UMNO*)—needed to be ‘translated’, so that members ‘from all races and religions’ could understand them (*Harakah Daily*, 3 June 2011). Among PAS’ coalition partners and the party’s reformist camp, Hadi’s Caring State rhetoric, and the absence of the terms ‘Islamic State’ and ‘*hudud*’ met a very positive response. At the side of the General Assembly, however, the PAS Syura Council Secretary General, Nik Muhammad Zawawi Nik Salleh, was quick to add that ‘the Islamic state and struggle are the most superior means that can unwind the societal problems of today’, arguing that



in essence, the Caring State and the Islamic State were the same thing (PAS Mukhtar 2011 Homepage 2011b, author's translation).

Despite insisting on hardline Islamist positions in a highly uncompromising manner, the PAS Youth Chief Hassan Nasrudin Tantawi himself follows a similar strategy of polysemy. In many of his speeches and publications, the implementation of an Islamic State has been emphasized as a religious duty. He wrote, for example, that 'the sovereignty of Islam can only be realized if we choose an Islamic State (*Daulah Islamiyah/Negara Islam*). ... It is certainly a duty for the Islamic community (to struggle for it)' (Tantawi 2011a, no page, author's translation). On the other hand, for openly declared tactical reasons, he does not object to the wording of a Caring State. Acknowledging that some PAS Youth members demanded 'returning to the goal of an Islamic State, not a Caring State', and adding that PAS had not left its 'basis, which is the struggle for an Islamic State', Tantawi (2011c, no page, author's translation) declared that the Caring State agenda was 'the second phase in creating an Islamic State' (*Fasa 2 pembinaan Negara Islam*) that would be fully governed under Syariah law. The Islamic State Document of 2003, he argued, had been the 'first phase', whereas the 'second phase' was now concerned with realizing the 'substance of an Islamic State' (*Negara Berkebajikan sebagai substance* (sic) *kepada Negara Islam*). The PAS Youth Chief easily switches between 'Caring State' rhetoric and the 'Islamic State'. He also occasionally refers to an 'Islamic Caliphate' (*Khilafah Islamiyyah*)—for example, when he spoke of a 'duty to revive the *Khilafah Islamiyyah* on this earth' in 2010 (Tantawi 2010a, no page, author's translation), or when he argued that PAS is the 'wing of one global Islamic movement', which was born from the demise of the Islamic Caliphate and aspired to 'build a new Caliphate' (Tantawi 2010a, no page, author's translation). Elsewhere, Tantawi (2006b, no page, author's translation) wrote: 'The duty to implement the Islamic State and *Khilafah Islamiyyah* is known and understood by all fighters for Islam and the Islamic movement'. He added the crucial explanation that PAS would 'continue to struggle for a caliphate', but for 'strategic' reasons, 'the language of PAS' struggle differs' (Tantawi 2006a, author's translation). I personally attended a PAS Youth meeting (*usrah*) in 2009, where he also mentioned the importance of (re-)establishing an Islamic caliphate in Islamic politics. However, openly envisioning a 'caliphate' is not simply a revival of PAS' 'first wave Islamist' rhetoric of the 1980s—it is, with rare exceptions (e.g. Awang 2003: 353), highly unusual in PAS discourse, and appears particularly anachronistic in an era when political observers believe that the youth of Islamic movements is undergoing an evolutionary process toward post-Islamist moderation.

The Ulama Wing, for its part, published a book which claims that PAS' Caring State project resembled the writings of the Muslim Brotherhood's Sayyid Qutb (1906–66), who usually serves as an ideological key reference of political Islamism. Accordingly, the Caring State would not replace the Islamic State, but mean exactly the same thing. The same argument, although with different connotations, was uttered by a leading Erdogan-labelled technocrat:

Husam Musa compared the synonymy of the Islamic State and Caring State with the ‘many names of Allah’ (Musa 2012, no page).

This simultaneous rhetoric of an Islamic State, Caring State and Caliphate not only between different factions, but also by one and the same person, can be explained by the fact that, from a social movement theory perspective, ‘(t)he diversity of meanings leads to greater participation and a greater potential effect’ (Munson 2007: 130). To increase its organizational resources and serve different target groups, PAS tries to ‘aggregate multiple identities and multiple meanings’ (Munson 2007: 129). For the same reason, it may be advantageous that there is no monolithic interpretation of the detailed meaning of signifiers such as ‘Islamic State’, ‘Islamic struggle’ and ‘Islamic purity’ among PAS supporters. But such polysemy is a double-edged sword: although it allows the mobilization of diverse clienteles, some supporters may feel increasingly alienated by an obvious lack of consistency.

Despite all tactical moderation, until today, even the most compromise-willing forces within PAS subscribe to the goal of an Islamic State that ideally should be achieved one day, although some suggest different terminology. However, the label of a Caring State is more acceptable for Malaysia’s multi-religious and multi-ethnic public, including the electorate of PAS’ coalition partner DAP. The emically interchangeable relationship of the two terms is rarely understood by observers who assume that PAS had already ‘abandoned’ constitutive Islamist goals.

The difference between the PAS reformists and dogmatists does not relate to the question *whether or not* it is a divine duty to implement a—however defined—Islamic State order and its ‘God-made’ laws, but is reflected in questions regarding *when* and *how* this target should ideally or realistically be reached. The hardliners—including the present PAS Youth leadership—insist that this goal should be achieved as quickly as possible, with a most-urgent normative priority. The so-called Erdogans, labeled by PAS journalist Johari (2011) as ‘post-Islamists’ (*kem Erdogan [post-Islamist]*) and by Haris Zalkapli (2011) in a Malayized form as ‘*pasca-Islamis*’ (post-Islamist), believe that it is a long-term goal. However, even they hold that it is a religious *obligation*—derived from God’s ‘unquestionable’ will vis-à-vis how life on earth should holistically be—to struggle for it. Thereby, the two opposed poles that constitute the spectrum of ideological diversity within PAS are once again positioned between the pragmatic Erdogan faction and the hardline dogmatists. One of the most progressive Erdogans, Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad (quoted in *Malaysiakini*, 16 September 2010), expressed at a public podium discussion in 2010 a—for hardline-dogmatist ears—unacceptable flexibility:

Yes, it (an Islamic State) may be our lifelong aspiration. But by looking at our demographics, it is only academic to us ... We cannot simply push it aside, so it remains as a utopian dream. But in realpolitik, it makes no sense for us to keep on harping on it ... an Islamic state will never come to fruition within what is foreseeable.

He further explained:

The Islamic state is a PAS thing, so we keep it in the party. That is the beautiful thing about coalition politics. ... If it is achieved through a proper democratic and legislative process, then we will implement it. But there is no such thing as a backdoor implementation of Islamic laws with PAS.

(Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad quoted in *Malaysiakini*, 16 September 2010)

The counter-forces, including the PAS Youth and many senior *ulama* strongly disagree with the claim that the Islamic State is a 'utopian dream'. The passionate attempts by Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi to counter such compromise included a number of papers that have been widely distributed within PAS Youth circles since 2009. These documents constantly stress the 'duty' to implement an Islamic State, obviously published against the backdrop of the senior party's public toning down its Islamic State rhetoric. In one such paper, Tantawi stressed that 'there is always a way to implement an Islamic State' (*Jalan Untuk Negara Islam Senantiasa Ada*), adding that it was the duty of the entire *ummah* to struggle for its realization (Tantawi 2011a, no page, author's translation). Above his signature, he added: 'Purify the Struggle, Bring About Victory' (*Murnikan Perjuangan, Maknakan Kemenangan*). This emblematic has become a frequently repeated key slogan. It represents his understanding of the dogmatic, purifying role that the PAS Youth should play vis-à-vis pragmatism and realpolitik. Indeed, it seems to reflect the normative outlook of the current PAS Youth leadership and their grassroots supporters at large. In a reaction mirroring the views of many PAS Youth members that I talked to, Musa\*, a young academic working for PAS, spontaneously answered my question how to solve the social problems of contemporary Malaysia in his bullet-like response: 'Create an Islamic State!' (Interview with Musa\*, Kuala Lumpur, 9 December 2009).

The contrast between Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad's and Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi's PAS Youth members' exemplary statements illustrates the hardly compatible poles within PAS. The debate about how to position oneself on the ideal-target (or 'life-long aspiration') of an Islamic State, is, at least behind the scenes, one of the most important sites of conflictive negotiation. As the PAS Youth firmly backs the dogmatist position, this dynamic also presents generational implications. The debates about an Islamic State serve as a field in which young members have the opportunity to prove themselves, emphasize their Islamic credentials and credibility, and delineate themselves from Others, both those outside PAS as well as the 'brotherly Others' within PAS. This is achieved through the passionate expression of a *different* and youthful idealistic stance, which insists that it is possible to radically change the world.

Contestations of the Islamic State question are not only concerned with finding an adequate 'Islamic' political course, but also pertain to position and power within the party. The different groupings, whose members have good

personal ties and intimate friendships, also compete for the hegemonic power that is necessary to be able to implement their group's political convictions of how the 'collective actor' PAS *should* behave. Furthermore, these contestations indicate that, despite a certain degree of syariahic–legalist consensus, the implied 'political Islamic' vision is neither clearly defined nor entirely stable, although it is, especially among the dogmatists, often imagined as such.<sup>22</sup> For example, during Yusof Rawa's tenure as PAS president (1983–89), the first time the 'Islamic State' received utmost superior priority, there was a considerable degree of Iranian-inspired fascination with an Islamic revolution as a potential way to realize the ideal order. At the same time, the envisioned order had sharp limitations in terms of the role democracy would play. PAS had clearly outlined that the powers and legislative authority of the Parliament should be drastically limited, denoting that a Ulama Council (Majlis Ulama) should have the function to oversee all parliamentary politics (Noor 2004b: 370–71), comparable to the way in which the Syura Council has since that time monitored all PAS' politics. However, this radical vision of how to fill out an 'Islamic State' with meaning gradually changed. PAS leaders increasingly emphasized the 'democratic' nature of PAS' vision, and some even claimed that they no longer had plans to change the Malaysian Constitution,<sup>23</sup> which previously had been labeled as 'Christian' (Martinez 2005: 142) and 'infidel' (*peraturan kafir*).<sup>24</sup> In its political communication with the public, PAS started to frame the envisioned Islamic ideal order in an entirely new language, emphasizing widely popular key terms like 'democracy', 'good governance', 'transparency' and 'welfare state'. Especially since the dramatic loss during the 2004 General Elections, it was stressed that PAS' Islamic vision was the purest and most just form of democracy, a claim for democracy theorists to judge, as aspects of 'sovereignty of the people' appear to be especially difficult to reconcile with 'God's sovereignty', particularly in terms of 'legitimate' legislation.

With such so-called post-Islamist tendencies taking root, and PAS officially walking the road of strategic compromise within Pakatan Rakyat, a reactionary counter-stream began to form within the PAS Youth. During his General Assembly speech in 2008, then PAS Youth Chief Salahuddin Ayub first suggested that, if forced to, the Youth Wing might need to bring about a 'second revolution' (*revolusi ke dua*, see Ayub 2008: 23) within the party in order to preserve the core values of the Islamic struggle in a new generation of leaders, implying that the Ulama Leadership takeover in 1982–83 was the first revolution. Both the young Middle Eastern-trained *ulama*, such as Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi, Nik Mohamad Abduh and Azman Shapawi, as well as many young graduates from local and Western universities with backgrounds in PAS campus caderization feel seriously alienated from 'post-Islamist' compromise on matters pertaining to Islamic Law.

Given that these contestations are still heavily ongoing at the time of writing, their outcome is hard to predict. What is certain, however, is that the defenders of both positions, pragmatic realpolitik and dogmatic idealism,

will, at times openly and at times in more subtle or behind-the-scenes forms, continue to compete for organizational power and hegemony. The normative order pertaining to how the collective actor, PAS, should behave politically as a 'truly' Islamic party is thereby at the center of this power struggle.

***Between norm and transgression: discipline, loyalty and criticism***

There is a strict rule within PAS that once a decision has officially been made via the procedural mechanisms of the party, for example, agreed upon by the Syura Council or a responsible Executive Central Committee, public criticism of the party's policies is not permissible. Loyalty to such decisions is obligatory for PAS members, even if one had disagreed with the decision from the very beginning. Violations of this norm can be brought to the Disciplinary Committee (Jawatankuasa Disiplin/Jawatankuasa Tata tertib), which is appointed by the Syura Council and can make use of several instruments to sanction disciplinary offences, for instance, a suspension of temporal membership or party activity. The central normative principles for such loyalty are *wala'* (allegiance), *taat* (loyalty) and *thiqah* (trustworthiness/integrity/reliability), and every PAS member must swear compliance (*ba'yat/berbaiah*) to them. Consciousness of their importance becomes regularly re-actualized through institutionalized indoctrination practices such as *tarbiyah*, which ensures that members would never 'betray' their party—and God—through disloyal behavior. According to the PAS Information Chief, Idris Ahmad (2010, no page), these norms, which are derived from Islamic teachings by the Prophet's *Sunnah*, are 'fundamental pillars' of PAS' struggle and ensure its success. Their normative effectiveness drastically limits the space for open dissent in the Youth Wing, although occasional transgressions based on idealistic justifications still occur. Ibrahim Mutalib\*, a PAS Youth key figure from its national leadership, explained the party's 'good manners for proper criticism' (*adab untuk menegur*) as follows:

PAS is *Harakah Islam* (Islamic movement). We have been taught how to criticize our leaders, ... how to accept criticism. ... we call it *adab untuk menegur*, the well-mannered way to criticize our leaders. So for sure ... we are not just concerned about Youth Wing, but also about the Central, the adult one. Because if we see that there is something wrong, then we will try our best to criticize, or maybe rather to send our message to them. For sure, the first method is through meeting. Because we have the Youth chief as our representative in the 'adult' national Central Committee meeting. So, we will decide at our meeting that the Youth chief should bring up the matter in the meeting. If there are still no proper changes, then we will meet with them. ... When all well-mannered procedures have been used, we will use another method. Maybe open critique. But we have procedures, well-mannered procedures. ... If there is no acceptance, then

we will have our own way. But for the time being, we see that the procedure is good enough.

(Interview with Ibrahim Mutalib\*, Kuala Lumpur, December 2009)

While this normative system of criticism and well-mannered conflictive deliberation is theoretically agreed upon by all PAS members and is usually proclaimed as the status quo of praxis, in reality transgressions continue to occur. The following will illustrate two recent examples of such transgressions.

The first instance occurred at the PAS Youth General Assembly in Ipoh in 2008, when angry protests from PAS Youth members erupted. Several young delegates barely minced words, attacking the senior leadership for being overly obsessed with appeasing Anwar Ibrahim and ‘following other leaders’, for no longer publicly speaking about the Islamic ‘core principles’ such as an Islamic State and legal system, and for accepting that if Pakatan Rakyat formed the government, the prime minister would not be a PAS member (*New Straits Times*, 15 August 2008). A number of young delegates joined this protest in a rare escalation of public criticism against the senior party. For instance, Wan Khairy Wan Abdullah (quoted in *New Straits Times*, 15 August 2008, and *The Malaysian Bar* 2008, no page) from PAS Youth in Terengganu issued a ‘warning’, answered by loud shouts of *Allahu Akbar* (God is great) from the audience, when he stated:

We (PAS) have larger challenges ahead but our struggles and principles are being compromised by the other two parties (PKR and DAP). ... We are giving a warning now; PAS will not be bullied in our quest to champion the Islamic struggle. ... We have heard many of his (Anwar Ibrahim’s) speeches and they confuse us because he does not want Islam to be dominant in the country.

This angry idealistic young man criticized PAS elders who emphasized the importance of focusing on unity within the Pakatan Rakyat coalition, in particular with regard to those parts of the party that have been described in the previous sections as Erdogan. A PAS Youth speaker from Penang, Mohamad Raduan Ramli (quoted in *The Malaysian Bar* 2008: no page), added that the PAS Youth would ensure that in the case of a government takeover, PAS ‘will not be with Pakatan if Islam is not in a governing position’. One after the other, discontented PAS Youth delegates reminded the leaders of the core principles of the Islamic movement, and openly challenged them not to deviate from this ‘Islamic’ path and the PAS Constitution. Ustaz Zulkifli Ahmad from the PAS Youth in Selangor—not to be confused with senior PAS member Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad, the earlier-mentioned senior ‘Erdogan’ who ironically has almost the same name—angrily argued that PAS should stop being DAP’s and PKR’s ‘doormat’, and demanded that the ‘Islamic State’, in line with the principles of the ‘Islamic struggle’, be put back on the agenda:

Some say don't mention Islamic State if we want the support of non-Muslims. ... Now, we have to talk about Caring State to the extent of some preventing President Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang from talking about Islamic State. ... We have our own president who is more qualified and yet they want Anwar. ... Is PAS willing to join the government ... if its president becomes mere Youth Minister and the role of ulama is just to issue fatwa and they are treated like a 'clog' to be used only when a fatwa is required? ... Why is Hadi not mentioned as a leader who should get recognition? Where is the 'Ulama Leadership' slogan?

(Ustaz Zulkifli Ahmad, quoted in *New Straits Times*, 14 August 2008)

The graduate of Al-Azhar University (degree in Syariah Law) added:

We, the youths of Selangor, will not hesitate to leave Pakatan Rakyat. What is the use of toppling UMNO only to replace it with an infidel government?

(Ustaz Zulkifli Ahmad, quoted in *The Malaysian Bar* 2008: no page)

Like Wan Khairy Wan Abdullah's 'warning', Ustaz Zulkifli Ahmad's loud and aggressive shouting was answered by enthusiastic applause in the form of *Allahu Akbar* (for a taped example of his outbursts, see YouTube 2009a). He expressed what is, among the young dogmatists, a widespread view: Whenever PAS President Abdul Hadi Awang publicly brought up the objective of an Islamic State, others distanced themselves in order to avoid upsetting the coalition partners, apparently commenting on views such as those held by PAS' pragmatists like Dr Mujahid Yusof Rawa, Dr Hatta Ramli and his senior namesake Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad. Put differently, the PAS Youth hardliners fiercely attacked post-Islamist tendencies of distancing the party from its position that it is a divine duty to utilize the state as a vehicle for the top-down Islamization of society.

To date, although it is much less public than what occurred in Ipoh in 2008, there is a tendency within the PAS Youth leadership to worry that party elders were putting Pakatan Rakyat above the core targets of an Islamic State and legal order. However, such differences are rarely visible for the larger public, given that usually most PAS Youth members follow their organizational norm of not making internal dissent public. On the other hand, at the same intense PAS Youth General Assembly in 2008, attacks were also led against *Erbakan*-labeled senior PAS leaders who had conducted secret talks with UMNO vis-à-vis the latter's offer for a Unity Government. These attacks addressed Abdul Hadi Awang himself, besides his 'PAS veteran' friend from Terengganu, Mustafa Ali. Yuhaizat Abdullah (quoted in *New Straits Times*, 15 August 2008), a PAS Youth delegate from Melaka argued that '(t)he behind-the-scene approach had caused confusion among our supporters. ... We should have backed off in the early stages.' Notwithstanding their anti-Erdogan tendencies, the PAS Youth General Assembly's delegates

concluded with one voice that any talks with UMNO done by the Erbakan-labeled senior PAS leaders should be ceased immediately, as PAS should not be power-hungry 'like UMNO', and in the worst case, should work alone rather than compromise on the 'basis of the Islamic struggle' (*asas perjuangan Islam*).

Muhammad Ghazali's\* criticism of senior leaders offers another example of when the norm of internal criticism and public silence is broken. The young lawyer, one of the very rare reformist-friendly PAS Youth Executive Central Committee members during its 2009–11 tenure, publicly accused senior PAS leaders, and particularly Secretary General Mustafa Ali, of being too slow in handling disciplinary issues (for which Mustafa Ali was administratively responsible). This accusation referred to the (Erbakan-labeled) then PAS Selangor chief, Hassan Ali, and others who had 'conspired' against the Pakatan Rakyat coalition (*The Malaysian Insider*, 2 February 2010). As if openly challenging one of the most powerful senior PAS figures was not enough, Muhammad Ghazali\* later criticized a decision made by the PAS Disciplinary Committee, which had sentenced the senior reformist Khalid Samad to a six-month suspension of party posts for criticizing Hassan Ali in public, while only giving the latter a 'warning' (*amaran*) for coalition-harming statements.<sup>25</sup> By openly questioning the 'credibility' of the Disciplinary Committee and stating in public that its decision was 'unacceptable', Muhammad Ghazali\* consciously transgressed the organizational norm of *adab al-Ikhtilaf*. He went public after his repeated internal attempts of submitting written requests to the Disciplinary Committee and Secretary General Mustafa Ali through the proper channel had been ignored for months, or were rejected because of what he publically referred to as 'stupid reasons' (*alasan-alasan bodoh*), once again lashing out at the normatively untouchable Disciplinary Committee and Mustafa Ali. Despite the fact that this issue was later settled, the transgression of organizational norms of behavior, targeting at an explicitly named top PAS leader and the party's most powerful deliberative body (the Syura Council-appointed Disciplinary Committee) with unveiled public criticism, is for the present time highly exceptional. At the same time, it illustrates that despite the PAS Youth's tendency toward dogmatism, some degree of diversity also persists.

However, only in the latter of the two recent cases described here was the norm violation followed by sanctions in the wider sense of the term, most notably heavy criticism, disdain and partial removal of Muhammad Ghazali's\* recognition within his in-group. In a conversation with Wan Mustafa\*, a leading PAS Youth functionary from Terengganu, he compared Muhammad Ghazali's\* move to go public with 'a small baby crying as loud as it can to receive attention' (informal conversation with Wan Mustafa\*, Rusila, 18 February 2010). Similarly, other PAS members that I talked to criticized the move, although yet another young leader, such as PAS Youth's deputy chief (2009–11), Ahmad Sabki, acknowledged that the cause itself had been legitimate and Muhammad Ghazali's\* motives were



morally sincere (informal conversation with Ahmad Sabki, Kota Bharu, 11 June 2010).

A central figure in Muhammad Ghazali's\* case, Khalid Samad (2010, no page), criticized in a weblog posting that even though the loyalty norms of *wala'* and *thiqah* were crucial, they were not meant to make members of the *jamaah* (Muslim community) become sheep that followed every direction their leaders went. Evidently, while the norms of discipline and loyalty, and the validity of the internal institutions to safeguard them, are shared by all PAS members and perceived as 'Islamic' and substantially God-given, the details of their interpretation and implementation remain contested. Conscious and morally motivated norm transgressions occur particularly among the 'hot-blooded' and idealistic younger segments of the party. Nevertheless, such transgressions, as the cases of Khalid Samad and Hassan Ali exemplify, are certainly not exclusive to such young men and, as the case of the General Assembly in 2008 has shown, do not necessarily have to be followed by formal or informal sanctions.

In any case, the group which has most often and most passionately transgressed, and sometimes subsequently transformed, party-internal normative orders for ideological convictions throughout PAS' history, and will do so in the foreseeable future, is the party's youth. More precisely, the actual force that traditionally leads such potentially innovative transgressions within the PAS Youth consists of its well-educated elites, young Islamists who are holding prestigious degrees from local or foreign universities.

### *Formation of the PAS Youth*

The Youth Wing of PAS, Dewan Pemuda PAS, was founded on 25 August 1953, two years after the formation of PAS. Its launch took place at a 'Malay Islamic Youth Congress' (Kongres Pemuda Islam Malaya), which was held at an Islamic school (*madrasah al-ulum*) in Bagan Datoh (Perak). One year earlier, PAS had already appointed Ustaz Dato' Haji Ahmad Badawi Abdullah (alias Syekh Abdullah Fahim), the grandfather of the later UMNO prime minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, as its youth leader. Upon the wing's formal creation in 1953, Ustaz Datuk Othman Abdullah (tenure 1953–56) succeeded him.<sup>26</sup>

While a comprehensive analysis of the internal historic developments of the PAS Youth throughout its 60-year long history would go beyond the scope of this book, it must be emphasized—besides the numerous fore-mentioned transformations which were pioneered by the PAS Youth—that especially since the early 1970s, the PAS Youth has become *the* force of 'first wave' Islamist reform within the party. Thus, the PAS Youth paved the way for PAS to both ideologically and organizationally enter the era of Islamic resurgence.<sup>27</sup>

During my fieldwork, PAS Youth leaders were active in fostering historic organizational consciousness among young PAS members. During several keynote addresses (*Ucapan Tamu/Ucapan Tema*) at PAS Youth general assemblies, for which I received the copies of the texts (2003, 2008, 2009, 2010), the story of the PAS Youth's historic formation and subsequent role as a key force in the

party was ritually narrated by the Youth chief at the beginning of each speech. This indicates the account's characteristic of a vital identitarian 'organizational narrative' (Schwartzman 1993: 44) which binds PAS Youth members together and nurtures their spirit of community. Before depicting actual anthropological observations of the contemporary PAS Youth (Chapter 4), I will describe the conditions of PAS Youth membership, the educational background of PAS Youth Executive Central Committee members, as well as the legally problematic but politically highly important field of campus caderization in Malaysia and abroad.

### ***Membership in the PAS Youth***

As defined in the PAS Constitution (2009, Clause 51, [3]), male PAS members younger than 40 years of age are members of the PAS Youth. Young *ulama*, however, can chose instead to join the Ulama Wing.<sup>28</sup> 'PAS Youth' membership is limited to males. Female youth is organized in the PAS Women's Wing, either in its sub-group *Muslimat Muda* or *NISA*'. The below-40 rule which formally defines 'youth' does not apply for the Youth chief and first deputy chief (*timbangan ketua*) on the national (*pusat*) level (PAS Constitution 2009, Clause 53 [2]). The previous PAS 'Youth' chief, Salahuddin Ayub (1999–2008), was 46 years old when he retired and immediately became one of the deputy presidents (*naib presiden*) of the senior PAS. It needs to be understood that this particular meaning of 'youth' (*pemuda*) should not be confused with Western sociological conceptualizations of the term, such as 'being below 20/25', 'not being married yet', 'not having left the parents' house', or 'not having a job yet' (see e.g. Schäfers 2001). Youth is, in essence, a discursive and social construct and as such takes on diverse meanings in different culturally specific contexts. In fact, the majority of PAS Youth AJKs on the national (*pusat*) and state (*negeri*) level are married (some with more than one wife), have children (up to seven, from my personal observation), hold a university degree and/or job (some run more than one company), and are between 25 and 40 years old. Young men are allowed to enter the party at the age of 'maturity'/puberty (*bulugh*), usually around 14. Until the age of 25, most of them are grassroots supporters or student activists (on the latter, compare later parts of this chapter's text).

All PAS Youth members are registered by name, age, address, profession, ID-card, and membership number in a book stored at PAS' Central Office (Pejabat Agong PAS) in Kuala Lumpur. New entrants have to swear an oath of loyalty (*ba'yat/bai'yat/berbaiah*) and each PAS Youth member must pay an annual fee of 5 RM (1 Euro).

### ***The educational background of PAS Youth Executive Central Committee members (2009–11)***

I was kindly provided access to the educational background of 25 Executive Central Committee members (AJKs, 2009–11 tenure) from the national

(*pusat*) PAS Youth, plus the three top leaders (*ketua*, *timbangan*, *naib*). From those, nine had studied abroad, five in Egypt and four in the United Kingdom. The Egypt graduates comprise the Youth Chief Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi (B.A. Syariah Law, Al-Azhar University, further studies at Maahad Fathul Islami, Syria),<sup>29</sup> the first deputy chief (*timbangan ketua*) (2009–11) Azman Shapawi (Diploma University of Cairo; B.A. American University of Cairo), Kamal bin Ashaari (B.A. Syariah Law, Al-Azhar University), Yussaine Yahya (Al-Azhar University), and the new first deputy chief Nik Mohamad Abduh (B.A. Syariah Law, Al-Azhar University; further studies at Darul Ulum Deoband and Darul Ulum Lucknow, India). These members are exclusively *ulama*, while the four UK alumni come from ‘worldly’ disciplines. The latter comprise the new second deputy chief (*naib ketua* 2011–13, AJK and head of the Bureau for International Affairs) Dr Raja Ahmad Iskandar Raja Yaacob (Ph.D. in Political Science from Manchester University), and the AJK Abdullah Abdul Karim (postgraduate Law student at Glasgow University), as well as two AJKs who are presently employed at Malaysian universities and must therefore remain anonymous (one holding degrees in Engineering, one in Philosophy). Three of the nine graduates from abroad have studied in one additional country beside Egypt and the UK, particularly in Syria, India and Japan.

Of the 28 AJKs about whom data was made available to me, 21 hold degrees from Malaysia’s most renowned universities, while some also attended religious schools. The Executive Central Committee of 2009–11 is thus largely comprised of university graduates from various fields, including: Engineering, Political Science, Law, ICT, Economics and Islamic Studies. This composition of potential future leaders of PAS reflects ‘the influx of more and more urban based, middle-class, university educated Islamists’ (Noor 2011, no page) which has changed PAS’ profile in the post-*reformasi* era and made the party more diverse in appearance. Many of these AJKs with academic backgrounds can be regarded young ‘organic intellectuals’,<sup>30</sup> including such members as: Riduan Mohamad Nor, an *ulama* with a Ph.D. in Political Science and a track record of numerous published books; Dr Raja Ahmad Iskandar and another (anonymized) person with Ph.D.s in humanities; and the numerous Al-Azhar alumni. Unlike ‘levitating’ (Schiffauer 2010: 24, author’s translation), or, in Gramsci’s terminology, ‘traditional’ intellectuals, they are closely entangled with a certain ideological milieu, which they seek to represent and in which their academic or intellectual activity remains rooted (ibid.). As Schiffauer (ibid.) argues in the case of the Turkish (post-)Islamist community of Milli Görüş, such intellectuals are spearheading ‘practices of resistance’ against absorption by, and assimilation with, hegemonial classes within the wider society, but also serve as innovators within their own community—in the present case, PAS. Having a distinguished access to the ‘outside world’, they are academically educated elites who represent their community for outsiders, explain the outside world to their community (ibid.), and at the same time build a crucial sub-group (or ‘generational grouping’ within their ‘generational

unit', Cavalli 2004: 151) with the potential to initiate organizational transformations. Being both a new generation and intellectual elite makes them the most likely agents of change in the party's future.

From these 28 AJKs, ten are referred to as '*ustaz*' in an internal publication of the PAS Youth, thereby signifying that they are considered *ulama*. Therefore, the ratio of *ulama* and non-*ulama* is 35 percent to 65 percent, respectively. In 2009–11 and 2011–13, the three highest Youth Wing posts were disproportionally held by two *ulama*, clearly mirroring the superior authority and reputation of *ulama* in the party. Of those *ulama* who held the top three posts between 2009 and 2013, all have an Egyptian educational background, which illustrates the highly distinguished role that university graduates from Egypt play within PAS.<sup>31</sup>

One PAS Youth key functionary of Johor, Suhaizan Kaiat, lost his job as a university lecturer due to his political activity in PAS. Two others, Mohd Taufiq\* and Irsyad Abdullah\*, worked under legally precarious conditions at Malaysian institutions of higher learning during the time of my fieldwork. In the following chapter, we will explore why being a PAS activist and a university lecturer at the same time is dangerous, and how PAS nevertheless has maintained its ability to use campuses as key spaces of youth mobilization.

### *In the shadow of AUKU – PAS supporters on campus*

PAS tries to create a better society whose members are knowledgeable about Islamic teachings and follow Islamic rules and obligations out of a personal conviction, not merely because of institutionalized force. To realize this goal, 'Islamic education' (not to be confused with UMNO-style Islamic, one may add) is of utmost importance. While party-internal education is well-systematized, PAS also controls—sometimes indirectly—a considerable number of Islamic schools and colleges across the country. Its educational activities serve to instill the values of 'true Islam' into the minds of the young generation, and to build a pool of future cadres—or *ansoorullah* (helpers of Allah)—for PAS. From an emic perspective, the success or failure of the 'Islamic movement' largely depends on its educational abilities, both qualitatively and quantitatively.

### *Campus Islam in Malaysia*

The Akta Universiti dan Kolej Universiti (University and University Colleges Act 1971, AUKU/UUCA), a law created in reaction to the 1969 'race riots', bans students and lecturers from active party politics or from supporting political parties on campus (or 'any society, ... trade union or any other organization, body or group of persons whatsoever', AUKU, Part II, Clause 15 [1]), unless pre-approved by the university. The only permissible campus politics take place through registered student organizations that must not have ties to political parties or relate in any form to party political matters. The

AUKU defines the respective punishment as ‘not exceeding one thousand ringgit or imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months or ... both such fine and imprisonment’ (AUKU, Part III, Clause 15 [5]). In reality, nowadays the punishment for students will usually be monetary fines, whereas lecturers are likely to be warned, expelled or risk non-renewal of contracts. As a result of AUKU, Malaysian students’ freedom of thought and expression in terms of politics is not only discouraged, but can also be dangerous. Collecting money from students for any purpose is forbidden (AUKU Part III, Clause 15a). Students can also be suspended or expelled from university if found guilty of committing any ‘criminal offence’ off campus (AUKU, Part III, Clause 15d).

However, despite the strict legal constrictions and regular arrests (see, for example, *Harakah Daily*, 23 January 2010),<sup>32</sup> local university campuses are areas of intense political contestation, with PAS and UMNO’s unofficial proxy organizations active on virtually every single Malaysian campus, operating in the form of ‘independent’ student organizations approved by the universities. At different times, they have been active under different names, and some organizations are present only on certain campuses.

Currently, on the national level, the most prominent proxy of PAS is Gabungan Mahasiswa Islam Se-Malaysia (GAMIS), with the ending ‘Islam Se-Malaysia’ already suspiciously sounding close to Parti Islam Se-Malaysia. Although there are no official links, GAMIS is ideologically and personally very close to PAS, and radically opposes the government party, UMNO, on religious grounds. The previous GAMIS leader, Ustaz Mohd Dzul Khairi Mohd Noor<sup>33</sup> not only became the Youth chief of the closely PAS-related PUM (Persatuan Ulama Malaysia; Pemuda PUM), but was also listed in the PAS Youth’s annual report (2009–10) as a member of its Institute for Policy Studies (Institut Polisi Study, IPS) (Dewan Pemuda PAS Pusat 2010: 67). Despite the fact that he does not openly agitate as a PAS Youth activist (yet), he remains well-connected to PAS and acts in an advisory role. As such, for instance, he sends open letters to the PAS newspaper, *Harakah*, in which he comments on PAS, and also other issues of Islamic concern, for example, calling for a ban on horror movies with ‘satanic’ elements (see Mohd Noor 2009, no page). At several demonstrations, PAS has sided with GAMIS, despite the fact that they appear formally as two separate organizations. This was the case, for example, when the PAS Youth led a protest against an Adam Lambert concert, an openly gay musician from the U.S., who performed at Bukit Jalil on 14 October 2010 (*Harakah Daily*, 15 October 2010).

Before this concert, PAS Youth and GAMIS members gathered at the Putra Stadium, distributed pamphlets and carried placards decrying ‘gay culture’. A picture published in *Harakah Daily* showed a PAS Youth leader standing next to a GAMIS activist. Later, during the concert, five GAMIS representatives led by GAMIS Deputy President Muhammad Zaki Sukery entered the concert for one hour and recorded the ‘sinful’ activities on camera. They entered the concert with special passes ‘provided by the government

agency in charge of foreign entertainers, the Central Agency for Application for Filming and Performance of Foreign Artistes or Puspal, as part of an agreement reached during a meeting with the students union a day earlier' (*Harakah Daily*, 15 October 2010).

Similarly, at a demonstration at Masjid Kampung Bharu in Kuala Lumpur on 16 April 2010, PAS Youth and GAMIS demonstrators stood side-by-side shouting 'destroy Israel' (*hancur Israel*) and 'get rid of APCO' (*undur APCO*), protesting against an alleged connection between Israel, the public relations company APCO Worldwide, and the UMNO-led Malaysian government.

A PAS Youth member, who now works at a local university, was also once the chairman of GAMIS in the early 1990s. GAMIS serves as the forum for the student organization Persatuan Mahasiswa Islam (PMI, Islamic Student Union), which is present on many university campuses (at UKM called PMIUKM, at UM called PMIUM, at UTM called PMUTM, etc.). In historical retrospect, the PAS Youth member explained that 'the whole Persatuan Mahasiswa Islam, we sat together to form GAMIS. GAMIS is the forum for all Persatuan Mahasiswa Islam' (interview with Mohd Taufiq\*, Kuala Lumpur, January 2010). When asked about GAMIS, Kasturi Abdullah\*, another leading PAS Youth functionary explained: 'GAMIS is actually a combination of all universities, students inclined toward PAS. But every different university they have their own name, their own brand' (interview with Kasturi Abdullah\*, Kuala Lumpur, December 2009).

After all, it is an open secret, and every Malaysian campus activist knows, that GAMIS indirectly belongs to PAS—indirectly, due to legal constrictions. In addition to GAMIS, there are several other groups indirectly related to PAS that operate more locally, unlike GAMIS which is active nationwide as an umbrella organization of the pro-PAS *harakah Islamiyah* on campus. One example is the Ikatan Studi Islam UKM (ISIUKM), which is a campus branch of GAMIS (and thus indirectly of PAS), and only exists at the National University of Malaysia (Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, UKM). Its former leader (*presiden*), Mohamad Idris bin Mohd Yussof's name card was printed in green and carried the slogan *Islam Untuk Semua* (Islam For All)—a slightly modified version of the popular slogan: PAS Untuk Semua (PAS For All). In 2011, he became a PAS Youth Central Committee member, heading the bureau for student affairs (PAS Homepage 2011). His successor, Mohd Nazri Mohd Tahir, was at the same time president of ISIUKM and deputy president of GAMIS. At the time of writing, ISIUKM's slogan was: *Islam Memimpin Transformasi Ummah* (Islam is leading change for the Ummah). This again, is strikingly close to another of PAS' popular slogans, *Islam Memimpin Perubahan* (Islam is leading change). On ISIUKM's homepage, there is extensive treatment of Palestine, *jihadi* 'martyr' Sheikh Izz ad-Din Al-Qassam,<sup>34</sup> and the struggle 'from somebody doing *dakwah* to *mujahidin*' (*Dari Pendakwah Kepada Mujahidin*), as well as a HAMAS and Al-Qassam banner. It also carried videos of the Islamic *nasyid* music group on its YouTube-based 'ISIUKM channel', and advisory 'information' on the Muslim way of life, for

example, the ‘four prerequisites for vitalizing your heart with the Qur’an’ (*4 Syarat Hidupkan Hati Dengan Al-Quran*). Other slogans stated ‘We Strong, Islam Strong’, and ‘Come on, cover your *aurah* (parts of the body that must be covered)’ (*Jom cover Aurah*), combined with a comic depicting a happy veiled woman. One of their videos, ‘(m)artyrdom is our highest dream’ (*Syahid kami cita-cita tertinggi*), showed crying children, presumably from Palestine, and a veiled woman with a child in her arms standing in a desert, while the tag line asked: ‘Do you still care about your brothers/relatives?’ (*Masih pedulikan nasib Saudaramu?*). These examples illustrate the wide range of Islamist concerns that ISIUKM covers in addition to ‘average’ campus-related matters, and how they resemble PAS’ orientation.

In line with the general trend in Malaysia, ISIUKM is actively involved in Islamic business activities. It offers a variety of ideological products for sale under the title ‘ISIUKM Products’ (*Produk ISIUKM*) (see ISIUKM 2013). Professionally advertised via new media, they include ISIUKM-branded jackets, ‘Stop Israel’s war crimes in Gaza’ keychains, different types of *kopiah* (Muslim skullcaps) and books such as *Memoir Jihad Anak Melayu di Afghanistan* (*Jihad Memories of a Malay in Afghanistan*, Afghani and Nor 2010), most of which have been (co-)authored or edited by the PAS Youth key figure Riduan Mohd Nor. Clearly, the marketization and entrepreneurialization of the ‘Islamic struggle’ (see Chapter 4) has also taken root within the realm of pro-PAS ‘campus Islam’.

In addition to the proxy scene and like-minded student groups, rumors from inside PAS indicate the long-established existence of a closely intertwined underground PAS campus network, referred to as *Jamaah Kampus*. According to these rumors, this network is organized in a similar manner as PAS and the PAS Youth, with a chief (*ketua*), deputy chief (*timbangan ketua*), etc., and several bureaus (*lajnah*). Officially, however, PAS members strongly deny the existence of such a group or any accusations that the PAS Youth’s respective bureaus (the Bureau for Student Development, Jabatan Pembangunan Mahasiswa, the Bureau for Student Coordination Abroad, Jabatan Penyelarasan Mahasiswa Luar Negara, and the Bureau for Graduate Caderization, Jabatan Perkaderan Siswazah), which paradoxically are responsible for student matters, are active in direct mobilization activities on campus. In a conversation with a previous PAS Youth leader, he went into more detail about this delicate topic, making clear: ‘you cannot write this!’

What can be said, however, is that there is an organized network of matchmaking and marriage arrangement on campus for like-minded members of the ideologically PAS-related in-group. This system is known as Baytul Muslimin (literally: house of Muslims). Shamsul Hussin\*, a PAS Youth member from Terengganu who had found his wife via this system told me that he contacted the matchmaking body, which then suggested a female marriage candidate from the same campus. The Baytul Muslimin Central Committee (Jawatankuasa) arranged contact between the two, in secret, so that only the two partners and the Committee were aware of this arrangement.

They had to keep their plan secret and rarely talked to each other in person, but instead frequently sent letters, e-mails and SMS, and were in contact via mobile phone. Finally, when graduation neared and the time was right, the families were informed of their plan, and with their consent, the two young PAS supporters married each other. Shamsul\* also explained the usefulness of such a system, as other women, he argued, would never understand the grievances that the 'Islamic struggle' brings, and could rarely accept all the energy that a PAS activist would be required to invest into the 'struggle'. Only a woman who was a member of the movement herself could fully accept and even appreciate her husband's activities, frequent absence from home, etc. (informal conversation with Shamsul Hussin\*, Rusila, 18 February 2010). On the other hand, I also met PAS Youth members who married women that were previously not involved with PAS whatsoever. Despite this fact, Baytul Muslimin facilitates marriage agreements among potential activists; either one proposes himself a possible marriage partner, who will then be contacted by Baytul Muslimin, or Baytul Muslimin itself proposes a partner. It is also possible that both partners are already in contact and have formed some semblance of a relationship, but, in order to make it official and legitimate, they will officialize it through the Baytul Muslimin mechanism. In any case, the initial steps of the mechanism will be treated in a strictly confidential manner. According to my interlocutors, this secretive body, which may or may not be based in a Jamaah Kampus of PAS and is legally forced to deny any links to the party, exists on every campus. These matchmaking activities are, according to Shamsul Hussin\*, supervised by the members of the Central Committee of the Jamaah Kampus. Such mechanisms also exist abroad, as illustrated by the example of Ustaz Ahmad\* the chief (*yang dipertua*) of a PAS district branch in Terengganu, who, according to his colleague Shamsul Hussin\*, had married a Malaysian student whom he came to know in Egypt via the local Baytul Muslimin. Furthermore, I was informed that beyond campus, the PAS Youth itself maintains additional matchmaking bodies.

A non-Islamist student leader, Muhammad Hilman bin Idham, who was the head of KAMI (Kumpulan Aktivis Mahasiswa Independen) when I met him at a demonstration in 2010, shared his reasons for seeking a different approach from GAMIS and other Islamist student organizations close to PAS, despite being Malay, anti-government and a partner of GAMIS. In his view, the religious-centered scope of GAMIS and like-minded groups was too narrow in the face of the complexity of many challenges. Instead of primarily participating in *usrah* study circles, discussing all matters in religious terms, and seeking solutions only from a religious point of view, his organization, KAMI, sought a 'broader approach' (informal conversation with Muhammad Hilman, Bangi, 2 February 2010). As the case of KAMI illustrates, there are Malay-dominated oppositional organizations present on campuses that are not directly associated with the PAS mindset. Furthermore, it must be emphasized that not all decidedly Islamist student organizations that regard themselves to be part of the international 'Islamic movement' and oppose UMNO generally



support PAS. Most noteworthy in this context is Hizbut Tahrir Malaysia (HTM), which competes with PAS about the leadership and interpretative authority of the 'Islamic movement' in Malaysia and uses the campus as one of its most central places of recruitment, including both students and lecturers.

Despite this, most government-critical student organizations, including the three Islamically defined bodies GAMIS, PKPIM (Persatuan Kebangsaan Pelajar Islam Malaysia) and KARISMA (Kelab Rakan Siswa Islah Malaysia)<sup>35</sup> and groups like KAMI and DEMA<sup>36</sup> (both multi-racial, but oppositional as well), were organized under a nation-wide common umbrella called Solidariti Mahasiswa Malaysia (SMM) at the time of my fieldwork. In 2010, the GAMIS Deputy President, Mohd Shazni Munir Mohd Ithnin, was the head of SMM, clearly indicating the central role that pro-PAS student activists play in the larger landscape of anti-governmental campus politics in Malaysia today.

When these oppositional student groups protest, police or the Special Branch (SB) intelligence personnel are usually nearby and arrests are regularly made. During my research, a number of such incidents took place, such as at a demonstration in front of the UKM campus mosque (Masjid UKM) on 29 January 2010, where two students were arrested by the notorious Federal Reserve Unit (FRU) anti-riot police. KAMI leader, Muhammad Hilman, was arrested several times (see *Malaysiakini*, 23 January 2010). He told me about the permanent presence of Special Branch spies whenever they organized demonstrations and open activities on campus. He also mentioned that when he was held for several hours and questioned by the police after a demonstration in Kuala Lumpur, they had interrogated him about affiliations to political parties. It should be added that the number of student activists in Malaysia is relatively small, with an apparently high percentage of female students. At one student demonstration at UKM that I witnessed, there were more female participants than male and the total number of protesters was less than 100 people. Despite this small number, under the gaze of uniformed and plainclothes police on campus, several members of the press enthusiastically took pictures. At one point, Muhammad Hilman was asked by a photographer to hold his protest banner in a different way, so that it would look better for the cameras (which he did without protest).

By the time of my fieldwork, UKM had just re-established a Speakers Corner, a British-inspired institution which existed in Malaysia prior to the AUKU era and BN's policy of de-politicizing the campuses. What sounds like a move by the government to relax tight student regulations and bring back a healthy political culture and education based on freedom of speech and thought, was put into question, however, by the level of surveillance that was immediately placed on this Speakers Corner whenever the SMM-related groups held larger activities there.

The pro-PAS campus organizations are also active in international networking, and try to create awareness for Islamist causes and political parties

abroad. On 22 May 2010, GAMIS organized a lecture about the 'Islamic movement(s) and democratic competition' (*Wacana Gerakan Islam & Persaingan Demokrasi*) at a Hotel in Ampang. At this conference, participants discussed the Muslim Brotherhood, the Turkish Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AKP), the Indonesian Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (PKS), and PAS itself. The event advertisement banner depicted a portrait of the internationally venerated Islamist icon of the Muslim Brotherhood, Hassan al-Banna,<sup>37</sup> thereby expressing GAMIS' self-understanding of being part of a global Islamist network and its intention to foster the growth in such networking.

Notably, the presence of unofficially party-related campus activism is not just a PAS phenomenon. This peculiar story could also be told about UMNO and its presence at local and international universities, with the '*Pro-Aspirasi*' group being just one of its obvious campus proxies—in fact, unlike pro-opposition activists, the pro-UMNO/BN activists do not need to worry about restrictions, and are in many ways privileged.<sup>38</sup>

In sum, the examples of GAMIS and ISIUKM illustrate how, despite harsh legal restrictions, campus activism remains a key site of pro-PAS socialization. This exists, despite the government's goal of depoliticizing Malaysian campuses via the AUKU for the sake of 'national security'. In this restricted situation, religion serves as an alternative channel for oppositional political thinking, as mosques and religious activities represent a relatively free space for politically minded youth counterculture. Although the climate of prohibition of thought most likely does harm to the political and intellectual status quo and future of the country, through secretive practices of resistance PAS has nevertheless maintained its forbidden place on campus, largely due to the idealistic, daring activism of students themselves. Support for PAS on campus is a reality that legally must not exist, but is known to all involved parties and authorities, being a well-established and historically rooted circle in which a sense of secrecy, loyalty and intimate in-group community is constantly forged and re-produced. On campus, in the shadow of AUKU, new seeds for the future of the 'Islamic movement' in general and PAS in particular are permanently planted, with the authorities and student activists playing a continuous cat-and-mouse game. The restrictions are not effective in restraining PAS from expanding on campus, but instead undermine the state authorities' legitimacy and the government's support among young, educated elites. The restrictions ironically seem to enlarge anti-governmental sentiments among politically minded students and the country's future elites, running counter to the actual political interest behind the BN government's insistence on maintaining AUKU for party-political purposes, more than 40 years after the May 13 Race Riots.

### ***Islamic students abroad: HIZBI and PMRAM***

University degrees are powerful sources of social capital in the PAS community. Academic careers, and especially having studied in countries like the United

Kingdom or Egypt, are thereby of utmost status-increasing importance, and often translate into distinguished party careers after graduation. Membership in one of the following two student organizations is a typical element of the life histories of foreign-educated PAS Youth elites: Al-Hizbul Islami (HIZBI) in the United Kingdom and Persekutuan Melayu Republik Arab Mesir (PMRAM) in Egypt. Both groups stress that they have no formal ties with political parties whatsoever. However, similar to GAMIS, most of their members are PAS supporters and all PAS Youth members who studied in those two countries were involved in these organizations, often in leadership positions.

The United Kingdom and Egypt are not the only countries of study popular among PAS supporters; in the non-Western world these include Saudi Arabia, Jordan, India, Pakistan, Yemen, Syria, and Japan while in the 'Western' world the U.S., Australia and New Zealand and are places where young pro-PAS student cadres organize themselves. In the ASEAN region, respective student organizations are active in Singapore, Indonesia and Southern Thailand. According to the PAS-based academic Musa\*, in the last 30 years the number of PAS Youth members that have studied abroad has strongly increased (interview with Musa\*, Kuala Lumpur, 9 December 2009).

### ***Pro-PAS students in the United Kingdom***

The oft-accused, although never proven PAS-related Al-Hizbul Islami (HIZBI) has a decades-long tradition of activity in the UK (Liow 2009: 173). It is, like PAS, modeled after organizational principles derived from the Muslim Brotherhood, has a spiritual leader (*mursyidul 'am*), a comparable hierarchical structure, and institutionalized Islamic educational (*tarbiyah*) activities such as regular *usrah* study circles and lectures (*kuliah*) for its cadres.

Some Executive Central Committee members (AJKs) of national (*pusat*) PAS Youth were key functionaries in HIZBI during their study in the UK, and forged closer personal relationships that they continue to maintain in PAS. The PAS Youth AJK Mohd Taufiq\*, who is also co-founder of GAMIS, was once the deputy spiritual leader of HIZBI. Another PAS Youth member, Irsyad Abdullah\*, who currently holds a distinguished position at a university, was a HIZBI leader as well. Additionally, the former PAS Youth Perak chief, Dr Muhaimin Sulam, was a HIZBI activist when he completed his Ph.D. in Wales. The PAS Youth's second deputy chief (*naib ketua*) (2011–13), Dr Raja Ahmad Iskandar, was a HIZBI leader during his time in Manchester. In their HIZBI days, Dr Muhaimin Sulam and the PAS Youth AJK Mohd Taufiq\* often discussed how PAS could benefit from academic work. Back in Malaysia, they tried to realize their ideas within the framework of the PAS Youth Institute for Policy Studies (Institut Kajian Polisi, IPS), which is currently headed by a HIZBI alumnus. As the cases of these influential PAS Youth members with a shared HIZBI background demonstrate, HIZBI is a key organization for the production of PAS Youth leaders.

Furthermore, as exemplified by the IPS, such networks built within HIZBI had effects on inner developments of the PAS Youth leadership at the highest organizational layer.

PAS and HIZBI deny any official relatedness, given the threat of AUKU and the possibility of government scholarships being revoked.<sup>39</sup> Yet, as shown here, it is hard to deny that HIZBI, as a formally independent organization, plays a crucial role for pro-PAS caderization in the UK. Official PAS activities in the UK, however, take place through its PAS Representative Council of UK and Ireland (Perwakilan PAS UK & Eire, PRC), from which HIZBI is entirely 'independent'. Similarly, the PAS Youth's Bureau for Students Abroad (Jabatan Penyelarasan Mahasiswa Luar Negara) has no formal authority over HIZBI whatsoever. However, the informal realities illustrated here tell a different story, indicating that PAS has a firm support base in, and personal networks with, HIZBI. This situation reflects the at times absurd contradictoriness of Malaysian campus politics in the shadow of AUKU, both at home and abroad.

### *Pro-PAS students in Egypt*

Founded in 1930, Persekutuan Melayu Republik Arab Mesir (PMRAM) is the oldest and largest existing Malay student organization in Egypt (PMRAM 2013). As it is dominated by members enrolled in local Islamic Studies programs, PMRAM is traditionally pro-PAS. Although, like HIZBI and for the same reasons, PMRAM has repeatedly denied direct connections to PAS (see, for example, Tarungkite 2007, no page), all Egyptian-educated PAS Youth members whom I met or received educational information about were PMRAM alumni.

The educational experience of Ustaz Nik Faizal\* can be used to illustrate the ideological closeness between PAS and PMRAM, and the occasional simultaneity of posts within PMRAM and 'PAS Egypt'. Nowadays, Nik Faizal\* is a member of the highly influential PAS Syura Council. During his study in Egypt he was a PMRAM member and served as the local PAS student leader at the same time. He told me that:

In Egypt I became PAS leader for the Malaysian students in Egypt. Afterward I went to Jordan, where I also became PAS leader (among the Malaysian students there), and I developed diplomatic relations with Islamic movements in Egypt and Jordan.

(Interview with Nik Faizal\*, Kota Bharu, February 2010)

By stating that he was a PAS leader among students in Egypt and Jordan in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Nik Faizal\* admits the existence of a PAS structure among students in Egypt. Furthermore, according to Nik, around 90 percent of the Malay students in Egypt are PAS supporters, although UMNO has a local presence (Kelab UMNO Mesir) as well.

Pro-PAS students in Egypt and neighboring countries usually have contacts with local Muslim Brotherhood branches. Nik Faizal\*, the earlier-mentioned Syura Council member, was close with the Muslim Brotherhood's previous Spiritual Leader (*murshid 'am*), Sheikh Dr Muhammad Mahdi Aqif, during his time in Egypt and, according to his own words, received 'leadership' from him (interview with Nik Faizal\*, Kota Bharu, February 2010). Through this network, he also came in contact with the new Brotherhood leader, Mohammed Badie. Even though PAS students and the Muslim Brotherhood have their own separate *usrah* study circles, they also held joint *usrah* together. Like many other PMRAM alumni who later became PAS Youth leaders, Nik Faizal\* maintains personal connections with groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood and HAMAS since his days as a student. Like many PAS graduates from the Middle East, he received high-level Islamic education and developed an internationalist mindset as well as a transnational network of contacts that are fruitful for PAS until today. Furthermore, since the Ulama Leadership takeover within PAS, Muslim Brotherhood networks constantly provide various forms of practical assistance for pro-PAS students who study, or plan to study, in the region.

The Muslim Brotherhood has deeply influenced the mindsets of many PAS leaders, such as PAS presidents Yusof Rawa and Abdul Hadi Awang, who were both inspired by their personal contacts with the Muslim Brotherhood in the Middle East in the 1970s and later spearheaded the Ulama Leadership takeover. This is also the case for the present PAS Youth-alumni from Egypt, who constitute a significant part of its leadership. The PAS Youth Chief of Melaka, Ustaz Kamarudin Sidek, told me that his intention to go to Egypt was not just to study at a renowned university and obtain a degree, but was also primarily so that he could learn more about the Muslim Brotherhood at the place of its origins (*Ikhwan Muslimin wujud di sana. Jadi sebenarnya itu yang saya cari!*, interview with Kamarudin Sidek, Melaka, 18 December 2009). One result of his study in Egypt was the foundation of a renowned religious school in Melaka, the Maahad Ar-Rahmah Solok Bukit Gaung in Ayer Molek, for which Kamarudin Sidek serves as director (*mudir*). The school's best graduates are sent to Egypt to further their studies. Some teachers at the school are also Al-Azhar graduates. The ideological direction of his school is closely inspired by Ikhwanul Muslimeen and Kamarudin Sidek's experiences of studying Syariah Law at Al-Azhar University.

Another PMRAM and Al-Azhar alumnus from the PAS Youth, Mohamad Raslan\*, stated that during his time in Egypt he and his friends supported the Muslim Brotherhood, but cautiously and 'in silence', due to fear of the Egyptian police under the regime of Hosni Mubarak (interview with Ustaz Mohamad Raslan\*, Ipoh, January 2010). The former deputy chief of a PAS Youth state-level branch, who also spent time in Jordan and Iraq, where he came in touch with the local Brotherhood branches, reflected:

When I was in Iraq, sometimes I did make a few (contacts). In Jordan we met, but we didn't have an official relationship. We had a number of meetings, we studied from their experience. And we learned a lot. They have a different environment and different contacts and so on. We learn, but we do not fully adapt it. And even they learn from us.

(Interview with Ustaz Mohamad Raslan\*, Ipoh, January 2010)

Beyond such transnational interactions, the intra-PAS networks forged during the time in Egypt are similarly important for community creation, caderization and ideological schooling within PAS. Several persons who were PAS key figures during my fieldwork had previously met each other in Egypt. Malay student houses (*rumah pelajar*) were a key meeting place, where they, as a close community, spent time discussing and studying Islam together, or sometimes simply 'joking around' (*'bergurau-gurau'*) (interview with Azman Shapawi, Kuala Lumpur, 7 January 2010).<sup>40</sup> This group includes the earlier-mentioned PAS Youth Melaka Chief Kamarudin Sidek, PAS Youth Negeri Sembilan Chief Ustaz Mohd Khairil Anuar bin Mohd Wafa, the former PAS Youth state-level Deputy Chief Ahmad Nuri, and the two national PAS Youth top leaders, Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi (PAS Youth Chief 2009–) and Azman Shapawi (PAS Youth first Deputy Chief, 2009–11). Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi, Azman Shapawi and Kamarudin Sidek were 'one batch' (*satu batch*, interview with Azman Shapawi, Kuala Lumpur, 7 January 2010), thus fulfilling the characteristics of a 'generational unit' (Cavalli 2004: 157; cf. Mannheim 1952; Pilcher 1994) with shared experiences and views, which also later became one 'batch' of top leaders in the PAS Youth. Azman Shapawi described his relationship with Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi in Egypt as 'close friends' (*kawan rapat*) (interview with Azman Shapawi, Kuala Lumpur, 7 January 2010). Similarly, Ustaz Mohamad Raslan\* was among the PAS students who welcomed Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi in Egypt upon his arrival, and described their relationship as 'very close' ('We are very close, used to be in Egypt') (interview with Mohamad Raslan\*, Ipoh, January 2010), just like the relationship to his old friend Azman Shapawi, whom he had already known well before arriving in Egypt, as both had previously been PAS Youth activists in Terengganu. Azman Shapawi studied Arabic at the American University in Cairo and another local university for four years (1993–97), whereas most others stayed at the numerous Al-Azhar University campuses, in and outside of Cairo, such as Tanta and Shibin al-Kum. PAS Youth Chief Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi received his nickname 'Tantawi' with reference to al-Azhar's Tanta campus, where he had studied.<sup>41</sup> As Mohamad Raslan\* stated, 'almost all those students from the Middle East know each other. We were close when we studied there. And even after we came back here, we still keep in touch' (interview with Mohamad Raslan\*, Ipoh, January 2010). The PAS Youth Egypt alumni network builds an important source for creating an intimate and relatively like-minded community, with long established personal ties of trust and relatedness. Its members are a distinguished, and

in terms of their theological knowledge, highly respected elite within the PAS Youth.

PMRAM is not the only Malay student organization in Egypt wherein PAS caderization, at least unofficially, takes place. There are additional groups that represent particular universities or campuses, and others that are based on the Malaysian state (*negeri*) of origin, such as the organization Keluarga Penuntut-Penuntut Terengganu Mesir (KPT). Ahmad Nuri was its secretary in the 1990s, while simultaneously being involved in PMRAM. Another example is Dewan Perwakilan Mahasiswa Tanta (DPMT), a Malay student body representing students from Al-Azhar's Tanta campus as well as the neighboring Medical University of Tanta, which claimed a membership of 100 students in 2010 (DPMT 2011). Founded in 1993 by 21 Malaysian students enrolled at the Tanta campus, the organization's first leader (*ketua*) was none other than Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi (at the age of 23–24) for the 1993–94 tenure. Fifteen years later, he eventually became the national PAS Youth chief.

## Notes

- 1 In the PAS Youth, two-thirds of the average AJKs are elected, whereas one-thirds are appointed (PAS Constitution 2009, Clause 52 [2]).
- 2 Published between 1898 and 1936, *al-Manar* was edited by Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida. It received 134 requests from Malays and those who would later become known as Indonesians for legal opinions, and published 26 articles with reference to Malaya and the Dutch East Indies, in addition to letters that commented on previous articles or asked for information and advice (Bluhm 1983).
- 3 Syed Sheikh Ahmad Al-Hadi had visited Mecca and Beirut, encountering reformist thinking and the ideas of intellectuals like Muhammad Abduh when he studied at Al-Azhar University in Cairo. Together with the Kaum Muda activists Sheikh Mohamad Tahir Jalaluddin, Sheikh Mohamad Salim al-Kalili and Haji Abbas Mohamad Tahar, he published the *Majalah Al-Imam*, with the first issue appearing on 23 July 1906 in Singapore. In 1926, he launched the monthly journal *Al-Ikhwān*. In 1928, he started to publish the daily newspaper *Saudara*.
- 4 Ustaz Abu Bakar al-Baqir had previously been a member of a number of Malay and Islamic organizations, including the first Kaum Muda-related, explicitly political organization Kesatuan Melayu Muda (KMM), and the youth group Angkatan Pemuda Insaf (API). He studied at Islamic schools that were influenced by the Kaum Muda. Later, at his own Islamic school, Maahad al-Ehya al-Sharif in Gunung Semangkul, he taught a respective brand of Islam to his students. He first came in touch with the teachings of the Kaum Muda at the age of 13 (I'm Getting Personal Weblog 2009).
- 5 Notably, this revolutionary idea never materialized to the extent of abandoning the sultans' religious authority, who are until today, at least on paper, the formal 'heads of Islam'. It is still legally forbidden and punishable to question their status. However, the de facto power over state-based Islam lies nowadays in the hands of the governmental Islamic bureaucracy apparatus and its various national and state-based institutions (e.g. JAKIM, National Fatwa Council, Mufti Department, JAIS, etc.).
- 6 This idea was earlier advocated by 'the first explicitly political organization in Peninsular Malaya', the 1938 founded Kesatuan Muda Melayu (KMM), and since 1945 by its successor PKMM/MNP (Liow 2005: 57).

- 7 The *kathilkadi* (Islamic magistrates) themselves were lifted to their position in a relatively new development supported by the British, with the first *kadi* being installed in 1879 in Perak (Ackerman and Lee 1997: 33). Before the British Indirect Rule, only the *imams* and *muftis* (chief jurisconsults) were responsible for the administration of Islam, based on involvement 'in a patrimonial network centering on the ruler' (ibid.).
- 8 Seven other principles were added: (1) To make Muslims conscious of Islamic political principles; (2) to unite the Muslim community behind one ideology; (3) to support press freedom, freedom of assembly and freedom of speech; (4) to increase the number of schools; (5) to make education available in accordance with contemporary needs; (6) to uplift the moral well-being of Malays; and (7) to look after Malay welfare and economics (Funston 1980: 90).
- 9 Although it has remained a single body since its formation in 1951, the name PAS has changed several times, from Persatuan Islam Sa-Malaya, to Pan-Malayan Islamic Party (PMIP) and Persatuan Islam. In 1977, the party was finally named Parti Islam Se-Malaya, which is also referred to as Parti Islam Se-Malaysia interchangeably. In recent years, English translations of Parti Islam Se-Malay(si)a tended to shift from the former translation as Pan-Malayan Islamic Party to Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party, and presently PAS is largely referred to simply as the Islamic Party of Malaysia. The relatively new translation, Islamic Party of Malaysia, was printed on the name cards of renowned PAS politicians during my fieldwork (2009–10).
- 10 To date, PAS was led by seven presidents: Ahmad Fuad Hassan (1951–53), Abbas Alias (1953–56), Burhanuddin al-Helmy (1956–69), Asri Muda (1969–82), Yusof Rawa (1983–89), Fadzil Noor (1989–2002), and Abdul Hadi Awang (2003–present). The other most crucial leadership position, the spiritual leader, was held by Yusof Rawa (1983–91) and Nik Aziz (1991–present).
- 11 According to Noor (2004b: 418), Yusof Rawa told him that his idea to establish the post was 'adapted from Hassan Al-Banna which he deeply admired'. For further details on this post, see Noor (2004b: 418–19).
- 12 In anthropological usage, the concept of liminality was introduced by Arnold van Gennep (1960) and was further developed by Victor Turner (1969, 1987). Broadly speaking, it describes the transitional core period of rituals in which an established order or hierarchy has become destabilized, and a newly fixed structure has not yet been formed (on liminality during youth rituals of rebellion, see also Schröter 2004).
- 13 Parts of this section are a revised version of Müller (2010, Copyright © 2010 SOAS). Reproduced by permission of IP Publishing Ltd
- 14 Informal conversation with Mohamad Sabu. See also his self-description on his personal weblog, where his inspiration, Ayatollah Khomeini, is mentioned four times (Sabu 2013). According to Noor (2004b: 625), Sabu once even advertised Iran travel packages via his homepage, clearly reflecting his lasting passion for the Islamic Republic. Sabu also told me about two trips he took to Iran between 2010 and 2011.
- 15 PAS continues to occasionally send representatives to Iran, e.g. Abdul Hadi Awang and Syed Azman in March 2010, when they met leaders of the Islamic Motalefeh Party and attended an inner-Islamic 'dialogue' event (*Harakah*, 19–21 March 2010). Furthermore, there was a visit of a PAS delegation, including Youth Chief Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi, in March 2010 (personal information from Nasrudin Hassan, SMS from Tehran, 5 March 2010). However, at the General Assemblies in 2009, 2010 and 2011, no Shi'ite guest was provided to hold a speech, unlike several foreign Sunni Islamists, clearly indicating the general tendency.
- 16 In Arabic, the plural form of *kafir* is *kuffar*. As there is usually no plural form for nouns in Malay language, often English or Arabic words are used in the singular form despite signifying something that is plural.



- 17 Between 1990 and 1995, PAS had joined a coalition with the Malay party *Semangat 46*, a breakaway group of UMNO led by Tengku Razaleigh and a few other small Muslim groups. This opposition coalition was called Angkatan Perpaduan Ummah (Ummah Solidarity Movement). At the same time, Semangat 46 was part of a parallel coalition with the Chinese-dominated DAP and the Parti Bersatu Sabah/United Sabah Party. Therefore, Chernov Hwang (2010: 643) argues that already during that time, PAS had a first 'indirect link' with DAP.
- 18 Among the comparably more reformist-oriented PAS Youth AJKs are Firdaus Jaafar, Abdullah Abdul Karim, Khairul Faizi and Ahmad Sabki.
- 19 See, e.g. Zalkapli (2011); *SiasahDaily*, 3 June 2011; Al-Mahshari (2011).
- 20 The weblog called PAS Erdogan Husam Musa 'a PAS leader who overly loves the infidel DAP' (author's translation). One source within PAS stated that this weblog was run by well-informed PAS Youth members from Terengganu. Another claimed that it was composed by outsiders or 'UMNO Cybertroopers', masquerading as PAS members. Yet another PAS member dismissed the outsider argument, saying that it is 'always very easy to blame it on outsiders'. The page is not active anymore since October 2008, but its archives are still online (<http://antihusam.blogspot.com>, accessed 26 January 2011).
- 21 This was reaffirmed by several PAS leaders prior to the General Election of 2013. PAS Secretary General Mustafa Ali, for example, declared that 'hudud is part of PAS's agenda, because hudud is part of the Syariah, and no single PAS member who is a Muslim can reject this' (*Harakah Daily*, 27 April 2013). Nobody in the party, not even from the reformist faction, disagrees with this position. Notably, even within UMNO, an increasing number of people have begun to share PAS's normative stance on Islamic criminal law (see *Malaysiakini*, 30 June 2012), and the neighboring country Brunei has officially decided to implement a *hudud* legislation in the near future (*The Brunei Times*, 16 March 2011, 29 June 2012, 13 March 2013, 8 June 2013).
- 22 In a representative statement in 2011, Tantawi argued that 'the change of leaders will not change the base/policy/underlying principle (*dasar*) of the party, because this basis will never change' (see PAS Muktamar 2011 Homepage 2011a, author's translation). On the other hand, however, Tantawi also stresses the importance of renewal (*tajdid*) in the 'pure' Islamic movement (Tantawi 2011b).
- 23 This claim was made, for example, by the Erbakan-labeled influential PAS veteran Mustafa Ali at a discussion with a closed academic audience in Singapore in 2009 attended by the author, and regularly repeated by various PAS leaders during recent years.
- 24 In 1981, Abdul Hadi Awang stated that 'We don't fight BN because of its name, but because it defends a colonial constitution, an infidel order' (*The Malaysian Insider*, 19 August 2010, author's translation).
- 25 In January 2012 Hassan Ali was finally expelled from his posts in PAS and the Selangor state government, for his own continued public criticisms against his own party and its agreed-upon decisions.
- 26 To date, the national PAS Youth leaders include: Ustaz Datuk Othman Abdullah (1953–56); Ustaz Datuk Hassan Adli Mohd Arshad (1956–58); Ustaz Abu Bakar Hamzah (1958–62, and 1966–68); Ustaz Amaluddin Darus (1962–66); Ustaz Jaiz Anwar (1968–70); Datuk Tengku Zaid Tengku Ahmad Panglima Raja (*pemangku* 1970–71); Ustaz Hassan Shukri (1971–73); Ustaz Abdul Wahab Yunus (1973–75); Dato' Mustafa Ali (1975–87); Ustaz Abdul Halim Arshat (1987–89); Ustaz Dato' Abu Bakar Chik (1989–99); Mohamad Sabu (*pemangku* 1995–96); Dato' Mahfuz Omar (1999–2003); Salahuddin Ayub (2003–9); Ustaz Nasrudin Hassan at-Tantawi (from 2009–).
- 27 For an excellent insider's analysis written by a PAS-based historian about the PAS Youth's developments in the era of resurgence between 1975 and 2003, see Ghani (2003).

- 28 Since 2010 a new exception includes DHPP members below 40, who instead of joining the PAS Youth enter the DHPP Youth section.
- 29 In theological terms, he describes his 'teaching background' as 'Salafi' (Tantawi 2011d, author's translation).
- 30 Gramsci (1932/1996). Schiffauer (2010: 24) made this term fruitful for a young generation within the Turkish (post-)Islamist community of Milli Görüs.
- 31 Furthermore, Nik Mohamad Abduh also studied in Lucknow and Deoband (India), while Hassan Nasrudin Tantawi holds an additional degree from Damascus (Syria).
- 32 In this case, PAS Youth figure Abdullah Abdul Karim protested against the arrests, which also included a member of the pro-PAS student group GAMIS. For another case where GAMIS activists were arrested for alleged involvement in political activities in 2010, see *Malaysiakini*, 30 October 2010.
- 33 His weblog (Mohd Noor 2011) carries the slogan 'I am a rider of desire toward the direction of heaven/paradise' (author's translation). In his self-description, he writes: 'My origin, an ejection of semen from a dirty urine channel. My origin, a place of earth where animals drop excrements. However, I wish to fly and search God's pleasure at the *Sidratul Muntaha* (a mythical place within the Islamic conception of paradise in the Afterlife)' (author's translation). He originates from Pulau Condong, Kelantan.
- 34 Sheikh Muhammad Izz ad-Din al-Qassam (1882–1935), an Al-Azhar trained religious scholar, fought in the Libyan resistance against Italy, and later in a Syrian revolt against the French in 1921. In 1930 he formed an anti-Zionist and anti-British militia, Black Hand, and was finally killed in combat. When police tried to arrest him, he reportedly asked his fellow friends to shoot back and die as martyrs (Schleifer 1993: 164). He became a symbol of resistance among Palestinians, and HAMAS has labeled its Military Wing the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades.
- 35 KARISMA was founded under the Islamist NGO Jamaah Islah Malaysia (JIM) in 1999. As an official goal (*visi*), KARISMA has declared that it wishes to 'become a contemporary student movement which generates change toward erecting *syariat Islam* in Malaysia' (see KARISMA 2013, author's translation).
- 36 DEMA (Malaysia Youth and Students Democratic Movement, Gerakan Demokratik Belia dan Pelajar Malaysia) was formed in 1998. It is dominated by ethnic Chinese students. Its goals include: 'To encourage direct involvement of youth and students in social realities'; 'Create a just and democratic society'; 'Against abuse of power, autocratic ruling and corrupt practices'; 'Oppose Nepotism, Cronyism and Unfair (sic) distribution of the nation's wealth'; and 'Uphold human right (sic)'; 'freedom of expression and autonomy within local institutions of higher learning and abolish the Universities and University Colleges Act (UUCA)'. In contrast to GAMIS, DEMA also demands 'equality', and seeks to 'Eliminate all forms of discrimination in matters of social standards, religion, race and gender' (see DEMA 2013).
- 37 Hassan al-Banna (1906–49) was a founding member of the Muslim Brotherhood (Ikhwanul Muslimeen). Until today, he is one of the most influential thinkers and icons of modern Islamist movements across the globe.
- 38 A PKR Youth leader who in the 1990s was a pro-UMNO campus activist at IIUM, told me that during his campus days his group even cooperated with the Special Branch to spy on the 'enemy' camp (the pro-PAS camp, at that time led by the current PAS Youth deputy leader, Dr Raja, and also to find out about who votes for which camp more generally). The Special Branch officers were on campus anyway, due to an initiative of (at that time UMNO's) Anwar Ibrahim, who sought to expose police personnel to higher education. Similarly, the PKR leader told me how the pro-UMNO camp cooperated with the university's vice-chancellor in order to defeat the pro-PAS camp (for example, by changing campus elections regulations).

- 39 For a press statement where HIZBI denies the common accusation of being a PAS proxy, see Al-Hizbul Islami (HIZBI) United Kingdom & the Republic of Ireland (2003). For an exemplary accusation of HIZBI's connection to PAS, uttered by UMNO, see Kelab Pertubuhan Kebangsaan Melayu Bersatu (UMNO) United Kingdom quoted in *Berita Harian*, 11 June 2002.
- 40 While they were in Egypt, the pro-PAS students closely followed the political developments in their homeland, with PAS' *Harakah* newspaper serving as one crucial source of information (interview with Ustaz Ashraff\*, Seremban, February 2010).
- 41 As Ustaz Ashraff\*, who studied at the Shibin al-Kum campus, told me, there were 'too many Nasrudins in Cairo at that time', so in order to avoid confusions, Nasrudin Hassan became referred to as 'Tantawi', which literally translates as 'the one from Tanta' (like 'Khomeini' translates as 'the one from Khomein', or Sistani as 'the one from Sistan', in the latter cases referring to their birthplace).

## 4 The pop-Islamist reinvention of PAS

### Anthropological observations

#### The modernization of *dakwah*: approaching the youth

The PAS Youth traditionally serves as a vehicle for mobilization and the accumulation of organizational resources, as it produces future leaders and grassroots support for the party.<sup>1</sup> Some of the strategies for attracting new cadres, however, have significantly changed since the political reform era of the late 1990s, when large numbers of university students, urban professionals and members from the new Malay middle class joined PAS and transformed the party's profile.

Grounded in empirical data from the author's fieldwork between 2009 and 2010 and an analysis of party-internal media until 2013, this chapter describes the PAS Youth's contemporary organizational practices, with a particular focus on its pioneering role in the pop-Islamist reinvention of the party's 'Islamic struggle'. The PAS Youth is nowadays very active in professionalizing PAS' public relations strategies and 'educational' campaigns (*kempen*). The main target of its 'approaching the youth' (*mendekati generasi muda*) activities is the young Muslim Malay generation. But although the media-savvy and well-educated PAS Youth elites are passionately appropriating modern popular culture, this process has, in sharp contrast to the scholarly narrative of post-Islamism, by no means replaced the insistence on 'fully Syariah-based' legal state organization. Instead, the PAS Youth is utilizing pop-cultural channels for decidedly Islamist campaigning.

But before moving on to new trends and the party's pop-Islamist turn, it is important to introduce a more 'classical' organizational practice of crucial PAS community-internal relevance: *usrah* study circles.

#### Learning the 'truth', negotiating the path: *usrah* study circles

A 'classical' deliberative procedure of internal education and collective decision-making within PAS is represented by *usrah* study circles. The Arabic term *usrah* literally means 'family'. On the national level, a PAS Youth *usrah*-meeting is held once a month at the PAS Headquarters (Pejabat PAS Agong) in Kuala Lumpur, while on other levels they may take place more frequently.

The participants ideally comprise all Central Committee members (AJKs), although some may occasionally be absent, come later or leave earlier. For the national (*pusat*) level, an attendance record is published via the PAS Youth's Annual Report (*Buku Laporan Dewan Pemuda PAS*, see Dewan Pemuda PAS Pusat 2010), so that all Youth Wing members can see whether their leaders are taking their *usrah* obligations seriously.

PAS members consider *usrah* to be a part of *tarbiyah* (lit.: growth, increase), the latter being a general term for all forms of systematic Islamic education within the party. There are different types of *usrah* sessions; those for the party leaders, in which stronger political-strategic and decision-making components are included, and those for average members, where foundational teaching and learning have priority (see Noor 2004b: 358). During such *usrah* meetings, religious questions are discussed, verses of the Qur'an are recited, Islamic sources are commonly read, and party-political considerations are deliberated. Furthermore, *usrah* texts (*teks usrah*) may be provided to participants for the purpose of internal discussion. As a practice derived from the Muslim Brotherhood, the *usrah*'s implementation on all layers of PAS in the formative years of Ulama Leadership aimed to bring 'party members together and encourage them to understand, develop and propagate' PAS' ideology 'among themselves as well as among non-members' (Noor 2004b: 358). The former PAS Youth Chief Salahuddin Ayub (2009: 39) proudly emphasized that particularly the PAS Youth had pioneered this innovation since the mid-1970s, before *usrah* and other forms of *tarbiyah* became widely institutionalized through the Ulama Leadership takeover in 1982.

The former PAS Youth Deputy Chief Ahmad Sabki Yusof explained the function of *usrah* to me as follows:

During our *usrah*, we understand the true meaning of Islam. What Islam wants us to do, from the *aqidah* (faith), the spiritual part, the understanding of Islam, the theological theory of Islam. And then the ritual obligations, the behavior, the attitude as a Muslim, and the obligation to preach Islam to other people. And the obligation to ask people to do the good things and to prevent people from doing the bad things. And the obligation of Muslims to implement Islam in every angle, in every aspect of life. From personal matters, family matters, social matters, in the society, and also in the administration of the state. So that is what we do. We tell our followers. So they feel that (it is an) obligation to uphold Islam as a way of life.

(Interview with Ahmad Sabki, Kuala Lumpur, 9 December 2009)

*Usrah* meetings are one of the most central internal activities for political deliberation and ideological indoctrination, for which PAS members regularly come together within their respective organizational layer. They serve as a ritualized practice which is particularly vital for the creation of community and 'like-mindedness'. *Usrah* sessions start with a common prayer and

recitations from the Qur'an, which are followed by discussions about holy verses, the life of the Prophet and his followers (*Sunnah*), the *usrah* texts, but also by questions pertaining to day-to-day politics, and confidential strategic considerations. In a national PAS Youth (Dewan Pemuda PAS Pusat) *usrah* that I attended, the PAS Youth leader Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi gave an opening speech first, in which he welcomed all participants. Common prayers and recitations followed, after which Nasrudin Hassan gave a longer speech pertaining to several issues of religious and political relevance, for example, regarding normative principles in Islam such as *ibadah* (worship) and *amanah* (trust, honesty). His talk also included the 'obligation' to establish an Islamic legal order (*melaksanakan syariat Islam*) under an Islamic State, which he referred to at one point as the 'goal of a caliphate' (*matlamat khalifah ataupun khilafah*). As a core element of the *usrah*, his speech meant to provide religious, ideological and political guidance to the group, which then discussed some of the addressed points. Following this, the PAS Youth Central Committee member Mohd Taufiq\* gave another—for my ears in this situational context rather surprising—speech. The UK-trained university lecturer and HIZBI alumnus outlined a historical overview of the 'great ideologies', ranging from Greek philosophy, classical Islamic thinkers to modern political ideologies (communism, capitalism) and academic discourses (like Fukuyama's 'end of history'). When speaking about the Islamic nature of 'real democracy'<sup>2</sup> and civil society, he argued that the ideal 'civil society' had its model in the society of Medina during Prophet Muhammad's rule. As linguistic evidence, he highlighted that in the Malay term for 'civil society', *masyarakat madani*, the word *madani* was derived from *Madinah* (Arabic/Malay for the town of Medina, where Prophet Muhammad had set up an Islamic rule under the Constitution of Medina). He then made suggestions about how PAS could make better use of the conditions of modern civil society, for example, by intensifying cooperation with NGOs. After this, day-to-day political topics were interactively discussed.

At another *usrah* to which I had initially been invited in Rusila (Terengganu), reservations were uttered about my presence by some participants because a delicate matter pertaining to day-to-day politics was scheduled to be discussed: the question whether non-Muslims should be allowed to use the word *Allah* to describe God. In the end, I was politely asked to stay in another room at the PAS Youth office and was given several photo albums and texts for compensation. Later that night, I went to a neighboring restaurant with some of that secretive *usrah's* participants. There it became clearer why it would have been so problematic if I had attended; some of the PAS Youth Terengganu's Executive Central Committee members were unhappy with PAS' official stance that non-Muslims should be allowed to speak of 'Allah'. If this PAS-internal dissent had been exposed to the public at that time, it would have been potentially harmful, given that the 'Allah issue' was 'front-page' news and the government-controlled media are perceived to exploit any visible disagreements within PAS. Furthermore, the *adab al-Ikhtilaf* norm

applied, which requires such dissent to be kept internal, especially as the senior leaders had already defined PAS' stance via the proper authoritative decision-making channels. During the previously mentioned *usrah* that I attended on the *pusat* level in Kuala Lumpur, to my surprise the PAS Youth chief even granted me permission to record the *usrah*. However, in the middle of that *usrah*, another leading PAS Youth member sent me an SMS asking me to 'please stop recording at this point', at a moment when a 'sensitive' matter of day-to-day politics was at the center of discussion.

Given their intimate and closed character, which allows a significant degree of secrecy, *usrah* meetings provide a space in which one can speak about what sometimes cannot be uttered in public due to organizational norms of behavior, and public relations considerations. As I had witnessed a meeting where delicate topics strictly not meant for the public were discussed, my impression was that the particular atmosphere of these activities serves as a valve for the otherwise tight regulations on public communication, norms that PAS members usually adhere to. In an *usrah*, everyone can freely present any opinion, despite the fact that later, one is obliged to follow and actively defend the decision that has been collectively made by all AJKs, as per the majority principle, even if one had categorically argued against it during the *usrah*.

*Usrah* can furthermore act as test sites for innovative and potentially transgressive ideas, or starting points for significant changes in the party's political behavior. For instance, the PAS Youth Central Committee member Mohd Taufiq\* informed me about behind-the-scenes considerations uttered during a PAS Youth *usrah* 'in 2002 or 2003', where the influential reformist Mujahid Yusof Rawa stated that it was 'not the right time yet to implement *hudud* and an Islamic State', as UMNO and its 'regime of corruption' should be defeated first. Accordingly, PAS should, for the time being, focus on 'the substance of an Islamic State' and not mention the term in public talk (interview with Mohd Taufiq\*, Kuala Lumpur, 22 January 2010). At that time, this position was advertised internally in an *usrah*, invisible to the public, while PAS was still loudly campaigning for an Islamic State. Following the 11th General Elections in 2004, the PAS leadership officially adopted the moderate-reformist camp's call for tactical patience and a re-thinking of immediate normative priority. However, since 2009, in contrast to the 'strategically moderated' senior leadership, the PAS Youth has tried to put the 'Islamic State and Law as soon as possible' target back on the agenda to safeguard the 'core principles'. When Farizul Azlan\*, another PAS AJK, narrated this change in policy to me, I was once again told about a memorable *usrah* session, during which the PAS Youth's new hardline orientation was first defined by its top leadership. According to this source, it was the first *usrah* under the newly chosen Youth Chief Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi in 2009, where the decision was made that the PAS Youth should—behind the scenes and in its role as a 'corrective'—remind the senior leaders more actively of the 'basis of the Islamic struggle'. Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi and many of his colleagues felt that this *asas* was in danger because of 'too much' compromise

and realpolitik under Pakatan Rakyat. Since then, the PAS Youth, and particularly its chief Nasrudin Hassan and deputy chief (*timbangan*) Ustaz Azman Shapawi (since 2011 continued by his successor Nik Mohamad Abduh), pursue a 'neo-conservative' agenda. This, however, is pursued for the most part internally, and is rarely taken seriously by local media and political observers. Another example that illustrates the PAS Youth's new 'anti-pragmatist' line, again uttered during an *usrah* that I attended in 2009, was the half-joking suggestion by a PAS Youth member to establish an 'NGO' called 'I Love *hudud*!', highlighting the idea that presently an overly intense *hudud* campaign was too delicate. Therefore, the PAS Youth should encourage like-minded Islamic NGOs to play a bigger role in supporting the implementation of *hudud laws*, and thereby pave the way for a more conducive discursive atmosphere. The PAS Youth key leader Nik Mohamad Abduh, who became a member of Parliament in 2013, also half-jokingly, answered: 'I am a supporter of this NGO!' which was answered by the group's cheerful laughter. The pattern of political parties trying to 'outsource' delicate matters to so-called 'NGOs' reflects a wider local trend; most prominently it parallels UMNO's alleged 'outsourcing' of the Malay Supremacy agenda to right-wing ethno-nationalist 'NGOs' like Pertubuhan Pribumi Perkasa Malaysia (PERKASA) and Pertubuhan Suara Anak-Anak Malaysia. Also other parties, such as PKR (as in the case of the 'NGO', Jingga 13) are trying to make use of such proxies.

Analysts who have no access to PAS' internal discursive realities on the ground tend to overlook the contents and significance of such informal processes of deliberative will-formation behind closed doors, which take place in *usrahs* and elsewhere, where the strict norms of public behavior do not apply. Taking this aspect into consideration, however, may increase the understanding of the dynamic relationship between the two different levels of official public talk and internal discursive contestations on the micro-level. It would therefore be inadequate to claim that PAS under Pakatan Rakyat has become 'post-Islamist', only because—for strategic reasons—a temporal public silence and patience on certain, even among the 'pragmatists' normatively undisputed, Islamist-legalist convictions was decided by some sections of the senior party. That the PAS Youth under Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi does not *publicly* attack the senior party's current line should not be inferred as real support or agreement. Instead, within the tight regulatory framework of prescribed party-internal loyalty and the norms which minimize the public visibility of dissent, the PAS Youth leadership had indeed pressed to make its idealistic dogmatist voice *internally* heard since Tantawi's takeover in 2009. *Usrah* meetings serve as a relatively unrestricted space to address such opinions, develop strategies to attach a greater political priority, and confidentially discuss ways to instill them within the senior party's official line. In sum, *usrah* meetings combine religious education and strategic political will-formation in an institutionalized form. They are intimate and at times secretive sites of crucial community creation and interactive deliberation of normative orders within PAS. In its own *usrah* sessions, the PAS Youth apparently tends to define its distinctive



identity, at times also in ‘brotherly’ and (mostly ‘well-mannered’) opposition to the senior party. During these meetings, PAS Youth members furthermore learn and regularly practice PAS’ discursive language and at the same time potentially can actively shape it, that is, if they are positioned high enough in the PAS Youth’s organizational hierarchy.

### *Saving souls on New Year’s Eve: XPDC Dakwah*

One regular activity employed by the PAS Youth to reach out to potential PAS Youth supporters are XPDC *Dakwah* (read: Ekspedisi Dakwah = *dakwah* expeditions). These ‘missionary expeditions’ are conducted on various occasions by members from all layers of the party. PAS Youth activists regard them as a chance to ‘meet with society’ (*bertemu dengan masyarakat*’, see Nor 2008b: 52) and provide the general public with Islamic information materials such as leaflets and brochures (*risalah Islam*). Typical ‘target-locations’ for such expeditions are places of nightlife and entertainment (*tempat-tempat hiburan*), night markets (*pasar malam*) and pop/rock concerts. However, these activities can also take place in various other contexts.

As an organizational tradition, every New Year’s Eve the PAS Youth conducts ‘*dakwah* expeditions’ across the country. On this occasion, the national leadership usually joins the ‘XPDC’ in Kuala Lumpur. I had the opportunity to attend such a mission on New Year’s Eve 2009/10. While the national and state-level (*Wilayah Persekutuan*) PAS Youth members swarmed three locations (the KLCC, Dataran Merdeka and Taman Tasik Titiwangsa), I joined the PAS Youth Chief Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi, Secretary General Kamaruzaman Mohamad and their compatriots in the area surrounding the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre, a crowded location that includes a luxury mall attached to the PETRONAS Towers that is usually referred to as ‘KLCC’. In the parks and streets surrounding KLCC, thousands of Malaysians annually celebrate the New Year, with spectacular fireworks, music and entertainment programs. Young (unmarried?) couples can be seen holding hands, and undoubtedly alcohol is also illegally consumed by a few Muslims—an ideal environment for ambitious *dakwah* to spread the ‘word of God’ and raise awareness about proper morality and the dangers of un-Islamic ‘social ills’. The head of the PAS Youth bureau responsible for these expeditions (Bureau for Dakwah and the Defense of Islam, Lajnah Dakwah dan Pembelaan Islam), Riduan Mohamad Nor (2008b: 54), once described XPDCs to be a self-strengthening and tremendously valuable possibility to leave the field of *dakwah* theory, as discussed in *usrah* study groups, and meet these ‘young kids who are groovy and bohemian, wearing weird fashions that distress the eyes’ (*anak-anak muda yang groovy, bohemian dengan fesyen yang pelik-pelik dan merimaskan mata*). Despite this group’s—from his point of view—sad and painful appearance, PAS Youth members should ‘meet and help them with a kind smile’ (ibid.).

The 2009/10 New Year’s Eve ‘expedition’ at KLCC started with a meeting of all PAS Youth participants at around 10 p.m. at the Masjid Asy-Syakirin

KLCC, a mosque popularly known as Masjid KLCC, which is located in a public park attached to the mall. Several leaders from national- and state-level PAS Youth leadership were present, accompanied by roughly 100 PAS Youth grassroots activists. In the basement of the mosque, a non-PAS-related Islamic New Year celebration took place, including Islamic music (*nasyid*) performances, Malay food and religious speeches. Accessible through a staircase that led to a back entrance, the PAS Youth conspiratorially gathered at a closed meeting at the first floor. Using a megaphone, Ustaz Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi opened the meeting with a motivational speech and instructed the participants about spiritual and practical aspects of what they were about to do in the upcoming XPDC. A common prayer was conducted, before the group spread out to the surrounding areas in small units of four–six people, each equipped with PAS-produced ‘information’ materials to be distributed to the crowds partying into the New Year.

I joined Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi, Kamaruzaman Mohamad, the influential young religious scholar Syed Abdul Kadir Al-Joofre, and two grassroots members on their mission. A young female journalist from the PAS newspaper *Harakah* accompanied our group, always trying to catch the best photos to ensure advantageous coverage. We carved our way through the masses as Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi and his friends approached the young people who were standing or sitting around. Reactions ranged from interest to disinterest and bewildered irritation to amusement. Many were surprised by the sudden and somewhat ‘out of context’ appearance of the missionary entourage, but almost all of the approached persons were willing to politely receive the information materials and have a look at them. Only one group of young men seemed to be really hostile. In another case, a girl wearing a headscarf and her male attendant (relationship status unknown) were visibly embarrassed by the situation. Besides possible reasons of transgressing Islamic norms of morality, this may also have had to do with the flurry of flashes caused by cameras from three separate people, a PAS Youth photographer, the *Harakah* journalist, and, admittedly, my own. These and other *dakwah* targets found themselves suddenly at the center of unexpected—and probably unwanted—attention, a situation which to me looked almost surreal in that surrounding. My attempts to ask some of the youth in the area about their opinion on this manner of approach were rarely successful, as most were reluctant to give any substantial comment, except polite phrases like ‘I don’t mind, they can do it’, or ‘it’s ok, no problem’. Even before such answers, I was interrogated about who I was, why I was with the PAS Youth, why I wanted to know these things, and in one case, whether I was ‘one of them’. One group I approached seconds after the small PAS Youth convoy had left revealed that they favored BN over PAS, and not one expressed substantial sympathy for PAS. When I told Haznul Mahmood\*, personal assistant of a PAS leader and a member of our missionary group, about the ‘actually-we-support-BN’ reaction, he explained that this was ‘normal’: ‘*dakwah* takes a lot of time’, adding ‘of course we don’t expect immediate success’. Haznul\* later argued

that ‘deep inside’, those who had been approached knew that the PAS Youth was right and that their behavior was un-Islamic.

One of the well-designed brochures distributed during this XPDC showed a comic entitled *Mat Sempit* (*sempit* = narrow), which graphically constructed the *Mat Rempit* youth (a motorbike sub-culture that is popular among young Malays) as brainless and immoral ‘narrow guys’. *Mat Rempit* were depicted as wild-haired and earring-pierced freaks who, while sitting on their motorbikes, drink alcohol, have extramarital or, as it is locally often called, ‘free sex’ (or *pergaulan bebas*), and ‘gamble during their illegal races’ (*berjudi sambil race haram*). Another comic on the same brochure explained that smoking is forbidden according to Islam (*haram*). I was reminded of a PAS Youth member, a leader of a *kawasan* branch, who smoked only in front of those PAS members who also smoked, but hid it in particular from a certain other, Saudi Arabian-trained religious scholar. Another of his (smoking) friends smilingly told me that he preferred to see smoking as *makruh* (an unclear legal issue which should be avoided) and not *haram* (strictly forbidden).

The XPDC’s brochure also showed three PAS Youth-produced logos. The first, *Orang Muda Geng Kita* (The Youth is Our Gang, see also the section titled ‘The Youth is Our Gang’ in this chapter) depicted two comic-style youngsters with cool caps and stylish hair, and a third who was wearing a Muslim skull-cap (*kopiah*) and beard and stood arm-in-arm between the others, while all three shared a ‘thumbs up’ for PAS. The second logo advised viewers to ‘say no to vice/sin!’ (*Katakan Tidak Kepada Maksiat*). The third logo combined two other popular PAS slogans, *Jom Sertai PAS* (Come On, Get Involved in PAS!), and *PAS Untuk Semua* (PAS For All). On the second page, the *dakwah* style became more classic: A text emphasized that the New Year 2010 was one year closer to death and Judgment Day, proclaiming, ‘ARE WE READY TO FACE IT? Let us CHANGE to become better human beings’ (author’s translation). What followed were ten tips to change oneself, such as always loving and pleasing Allah and Prophet Muhammad, respecting one’s parents, praying (as it would be calculated in Allah’s judgment), not giving in to one’s uncontrolled and thus self-destructive emotions (*nafsu*), loving others instead of fighting them, not oppressing others, and constantly preparing oneself for the Hereafter (*akhirat*). The brochure’s producers, the PAS Youth Bureau for Dakwah and the Defense of Islam, had also added a comic-style picture, which showed five veiled girls plus the slogan: *Katakan Tidak Pada Pergaulan Bebas* (Say No to Extramarital Sex).

After handing out as many brochures as possible, midnight arrived and a huge firework lit up the sky. For a moment, the members of my group stopped their activity, looked at the sky and, together with the public, witnessed the impressive display of pyrotechnics. During the colorful spectacle, I asked the PAS Youth chief about his ‘Islamic point of view’ (*dari segi Islam*) about fireworks. With a firm voice he answered ‘*kurang baik*’ (not good), although he added that it was not in general *haram* (forbidden). Following the display,

the group slowly returned to the starting point of the XPDC, Masjid KLCC. Along the way, the Secretary General, Kamaruzaman Mohamad, expressed dissatisfaction with the dimension and costs of these fireworks, and emphasized how much more usefully the money could have been spent. He added that in his home state, the 'PAS heartland' Kelantan, New Year celebrations were very different and more reasonable, with colorful bulbs instead of unnecessary excessive pyrotechnics.

When I chatted with Haznul\* while walking through the crowds, he pointed to the masses and told me: 'Once we are in power, it will not be like this anymore!' When I then asked him whether PAS would ban such activities if it had the chance to do so, he answered 'not banning it, but making it much smaller and better controlled'. We finally returned to the KLCC mosque, and all participants of the XPDC reunited on the wide stairs of the *masjid's* rear entrance. After a common prayer, Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi again addressed the PAS Youth activists with his megaphone, reflecting on the experience, encouraging them not to shy away from rejective reactions or painful feelings during their holy mission. At around 1 a.m., the group dispersed, although a few decided to continue their work at *Taman Tasek Titiwangsa*, where the PAS Youth had also been active that night.

Notably, the PAS Youth was not the only group conducting *dakwah* at KLCC that night. One hour before the PAS Youth met at Masjid KLCC, I coincidentally ran into another missionary group that gathered in front of the same mosque. As I thought they were also joining the PAS Youth XPDC and approached two of them, I was surprised to find out that they were youth cadres of Jamaah Islam Malaysia (JIM), who conducted a parallel *dakwah* mission in the area that night. The JIM is a (currently) 'PAS-friendly' Islamic NGO, founded as an offspring of PAS in the 1980s and is currently aspiring for the full implementation of Syariah law in Malaysia by 2020, an Islamist futurity alternative to Mahathir Mohamad's famous 'Vision 2020' (on Muslim futurities in Southeast Asia, see also Barendregt 2009). The earlier-mentioned pro-PAS student group GAMIS holds similar *dakwah* activities on New Year's Eve, and in their case they are even labeled in PAS-style as XPDC *Dakwah* (see *Harakah Daily*, 2 January 2011). Obviously, Islamist missions in Malaysia are a contested terrain, also beyond the 'PAS Islam' versus 'UMNO Islam' divide. Different, while mostly competing in a friendly manner, anti-governmental Islamist groups try to save souls, collect *pahala* (personal reward points for Judgment Day), and, at the same time, seek to win over new supporters and social influence for their organizations. The New Year's Eve seems to be a favorite for such missionary efforts. It allows pious young activists to have their own precious ritual activity during a night of festive public celebrations, missionary work that acts as an alternative to, although entangled with, those of the yet-to-be-converted masses. After all, a crucial impact of these XPDCs in terms of community formation and identity politics may also take place within the missionary groups themselves, as opposed to those who they seek to persuade to join the cause. Furthermore, the usage of

colorful comic-style graphics, and the professionalized advertising of XPDC *Dakwah* activities via social media indicate the increasingly pop-Islamist orientation of the PAS Youth, which seeks to appropriate certain elements of modern popular culture for a more effective dissemination of Islamist religio-political messages.

### *The Youth is Our Gang*

The program slogan, *Orang Muda Geng Kita* (The Youth is Our Gang) serves as an umbrella for several PAS Youth activities since 2010. To make it sound more colloquial or 'cool', some promotional materials spelled the slogan: *Orang Mude Geng Kite*. Replacing the end '-a' with an '-e' corresponds with informal Malay, representing the PAS Youth leadership's attempts to 'approach the youth' by appearing less formal and 'speaking the language of the youth' in order to enable the mobilization of wider clienteles for the 'Islamic struggle'.

The PAS Youth's tactical opening to new forms of popular culture that had previously been perceived to be incompatible with Islam began as a new development during the tenure of Salahuddin Ayub since the mid-2000s. The PAS Youth's strategy to develop a more 'trendy' profile was further intensified after a pro-opposition academic from the University of Malaya (UM), Dr Abu Hassan Hasbullah, presented a controversial survey at a PAS meeting which I attended in Gombak in November 2009. Among other findings, he revealed that large parts of the young generation were not attracted by PAS. From 2,100 persons of the general public (divided into three age groups), 90 percent of those between 20 and 30 years of age had lost faith in the PAS leadership. Additionally, 74 percent of those between 31 and 40 years of age had little confidence in it, with the PAS Spiritual Leader Nik Aziz being far more popular among the youth than the PAS President Abdul Hadi Awang. Even more disturbing from a PAS Youth perspective was that none of the respondents were able to name the newly appointed PAS Youth Chief Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi, who had come into office a few months earlier (*The Star*, 8 November 2009). Although he was aggressively labeled by some voices in the PAS audience as an 'agent of UMNO' (*agen UMNO*) and 'agent of the West' (*agen barat*) (*The Star*, 8 November 2009; see also: *Malaysiakini*, 7 November 2009), most PAS leaders paid a great deal of attention to the information presented by Dr Abu Hassan Hasbullah and another academic, Dr Abdul Aziz Bari.<sup>3</sup> Soon after, Dr Abdul Aziz Bari was invited to the PAS Youth Headquarters, in order to show that the PAS Youth had an 'open behavior toward constructive critical voices' (Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi, quoted in *Harakah Daily*, 11 November 2009, author's translation).

As a result, the PAS Youth further widened its ongoing search for new ways to more effectively attract larger numbers of young Malaysians. One such innovative method developed to win over young 'hearts and minds' was the *Orang Muda Geng Kita* campaign. The underlying motivation was to make

PAS more attractive for young Malaysians who are not yet PAS supporters, and are not easily reached through the party's classic outreach methods, such as religious lectures (*kuliah*) and religio-political speeches (*ceramah*). The intended message was that being 'cool' and (PAS-style) 'Islamic' is not a contradiction, and one does not need to wear a white robe, beard, or turban to support PAS. Instead, a pious PAS Youth member could look like hip-hop stars, a rocker, a motorbike fanatic, or just an 'average Joe'. This was also aimed to be visually communicated through *Orang Muda Geng Kita's* colorful logos, which were designed to look contemporary and stylish, so that 'average' young people could hopefully identify themselves with them and subsequently become attracted to PAS.

### **Dakwah on motorbikes: The Alternative Riding Club (ARC)**

Organized under the PAS Youth's Bureau for Art, Culture and Sports (Lajnah Kesenian, Kebudayaan & Sukan), one activity associated with the theme *Orang Muda Geng Kita* is the Alternative Riding Club (ARC).<sup>4</sup> As illegal motorbiking and the related *Mat Rempit* sub-culture are presently widespread among young Malays, the PAS Youth intended to offer an 'Islamic alternative' for young people who are interested in motorbiking. While *Mat Rempit* culture is often popularly—and in many bestselling Malaysian movies depicted to be<sup>5</sup>—associated with drugs, prostitution, rudeness and crime, the PAS Youth strategists have discovered the motorbike and its social capacities as a channel for *dakwah* and for potentially attracting new target groups to join PAS.

Several motorbike 'convoys' (*konvoi*) and 'expeditions' (*expedisi*) have since been organized, such as a tour of bikers to the—among Islamists—infamous casino in Genting Highlands. In one case, the PAS top-priority issue, Palestine (cf. Müller 2010), was combined with the ARC's motorbike *dakwah* when PAS organized an 'ARC-Gaza Motorbike Convoy' (ARC Konvoi Bermotor Gaza) in Selangor on 4 April 2010. During such expeditions, all followers dress in green ARC shirts or pullovers and pictures are taken for public relations purposes, for instance, a large crowd of bikers sitting on their vehicles and praying. These photos are later widely circulated via social media such as Facebook and PAS Youth-related weblogs. Participants experience a modern and mobile community, whereas externally the objective is to show young Malays who are part of the motorbiking sub-culture that one can be a cool biker and a pious PAS supporter at the same time. The ARC activities thereby include not only nationwide motorbike tours and meetings, but also offer motorbike services for free (*servis motorsikal percuma*), free motor oil for riders below the age of 40 (*service minyak hitam percuma untuk belia 18–40 tahun*), and a campaign to raise awareness for road safety and responsible driving (*Kempen Keselamatan Jalan Raya*).<sup>6</sup> Such free or voluntary community services are typical tools for social movement organizations to generate support and legitimacy. Their organizational purpose is, to borrow a wording

from the sociologist Ziad Munson (2007: 124), ‘to recruit people into the cause’, although initially, having fun and socializing may be the main motivation for many participants.

The PAS Youth Chief Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi attended several ARC events and staged his interest in motorbikes. At one such event, he was wearing a flashy green ARC pullover in addition to his usual turban, an apparent attempt to transform both PAS’ and his own image, thereby creating a more attractive and approachable profile for potential ‘*dakwah* targets’. In line with globalized methods of modern political marketing, well-designed ARC logos and slogans have been created and information about ARC’s activities is widely distributed through the PAS Youth’s new media channels. Again, the message is clear: You can be a cool motorbiker and a pious PAS-supporting Muslim at the same time, and second, the PAS Youth offers exciting shared experiences within a family-like community of like-minded, trustworthy Islamic ‘brothers’: The Youth is Our Gang!

### **The PAS Youth’s appropriation of new media**

As described in Chapter 2, for decades the UMNO-led *Barisan Nasional* government apparatus has effectively controlled, owned and censored local media such as newspapers and television stations, while PAS depends on alternative means of political communication with the public. In the past, such channels were limited to *ceramah* (political speeches), Islamic education, face-to-face missionary practices, community services and welfare activities, the distribution of leaflets, and since 1987, the PAS newspaper *Harakah*. The latter, is, however, only allowed to be distributed to PAS members, and has to annually reapply for a publishing permit.<sup>7</sup> With the rise of the Internet as an extension of the discursive public sphere and a new site of political activity since the late 1990s, PAS has invested intense efforts to make use of this differently structured field of mass communication. To a previously unimaginable extent, the Internet has allowed opposition parties and civil society actors to sideline the regime of media control. Primarily, the young and new media-savvy generation pioneered PAS’ entrance into the ‘digital age’. By the time of my fieldwork, the Internet had become a crucial site of mass-communication and mobilization for PAS, particularly in terms of the—politically highly influential—younger urban and semi-urban segments of its community. In addition to numerous official homepages of branches from all organizational layers across the country, and personal weblogs of PAS leaders, and grassroots members, interactive social media such as Facebook and Twitter have become key channels of the PAS Youth’s digital activism.

Particularly Facebook has become a regular feature of the PAS Youth community’s everyday lifeworld and is apparently seen as an essential tool for practically realizing the party’s ‘Islamic struggle’. A great deal of this Facebook communication takes place via the profiles of individual PAS Youth members who share their thoughts via postings which are visible to their

Facebook friends. They also share information about upcoming or recently held PAS events and activities, photo albums and comments, all of which is often followed by lively online discussions about these materials. Between 2009 and 2010, the national PAS Youth leadership had also maintained an official Facebook page, which in 2010 was transformed into a Facebook news-service called *Harakah Muda* (Young *Harakah*). Since that time, Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi and the PAS Youth leadership regularly circulate day-to-day news, articles, discussion papers, *tarbiyah* materials, event announcements and other information via *Harakah Muda*.

Prior to his first re-election as youth chief in 2011, the then (among some PAS members) quite controversial Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi suggested that followers on Facebook send him frank critiques about his leadership. He added that if anybody had more suitable persons in mind for his post that they should propose these suggestions to him. This 'request' fulfilled the PAS Youth's norm, according to which leaders should emphasize that they 'do not want to be a leader' (interview with PAS Youth Central Committee member Zarif\*, Kuala Lumpur, December 2009), but are 'obliged' to 'serve' the community of believers (*jamaah*) due to a collective decision. Although this particular Facebook posting was not visibly answered (except by his supporters), critical views aiming at the leadership are sometimes uttered by grassroots members on Facebook. For example, when Ustaz Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi posted pictures of himself visiting a heavy metal concert in Chow Kit and proudly shared his experiences in text form, one critical voice added that *dakwah* should go beyond punctual visits and superficial photo shooting opportunities. Most likely, it is much easier to dare to criticize leaders through such digital channels, where the critics have easy access to, but do not bodily have to face those who they wish to criticize.

The previous PAS Youth profile on Facebook (called Dewan Pemuda PAS Malaysia), launched in December 2009, had 8,658 'fans' by May 2010, with the number constantly going up each month. Of these followers, 84 percent were male and 15 percent female, and 54 percent were between 18 and 24 years old (10 percent between 13 and 17 years; 24 percent between 25 and 34 years, 7 percent between 35 and 44, and 3 percent above 45). By June 2013, the PAS Youth's new Facebook profile, *Harakah Muda*, had 25,000 'fans', including the participatively observing author. In addition, many bureaus (*lajnah/birol/jabatan*) and branches from different organizational layers are active via their own profiles. Even most senior PAS leaders are nowadays present on Facebook and weblogs, although colleagues from the PAS Youth often manage their pages. More than 140,000 followers had 'liked' the profile of PAS President Abdul Hadi Awang in 2013, for example, and the page of the PAS Spiritual Leader Nik Abdul Aziz had even 1,001,662 fans.

One widespread emic view on the PAS Youth's function for the party is its task to initiate and implement innovations in the realm of mobilization strategies. Many of my interlocutors mentioned the utilization of new media as a key component of the PAS Youth's present role. The PAS Youth's self-conceptualization



as a pioneer of new media for the 'Islamic movement' is presently constitutive of its collective identity. Azman Shapawi, the PAS Youth Deputy Chief (*timbangan ketua*) during my fieldwork, complained about the little space that PAS was given on television, which he regarded to be the most influential opinion-making medium particularly for rural Malays from the older generation. In contrast, he argued that the young generation had a much better knowledge about politics, thanks to its access to and literacy in new media, to an increasing extent even in rural areas (interview with Azman Shapawi, Kuala Lumpur, 7 January 2010).

After elaborating on the importance of new media for younger and urban target groups, the current PAS Deputy President (*timbangan presiden*), Mohamad Sabu, also stressed their limits in terms of the older generation, particularly in rural areas. Sabu, who maintains a personal weblog and Facebook page, added that 'the rural people still depend on *ceramah*, *kempen* and everything. Urban areas of course can accept the Internet' (interview with Mohamad Sabu, Kuala Lumpur, 2 March 2010). The PAS Youth's Dr Raja Ahmad Iskandar stated that old people had comparably little understanding why Facebook was important for politics arguing, that 'the old group still sometimes cannot accept globalization, the changes that are happening all over the world. So, to us (the PAS Youth) it is normal, we are doing it (using new media as political tools) based on the environment, based on the changes' (interview with Dr Raja Ahmad Iskandar, Kuala Lumpur, 7 December 2009).

Previous PAS Youth chief of Melaka, Kamarudin Sidek, emphasized the power of new media for mobilizing young supporters, and its usefulness for sidelining government-controlled official media (interview with Ustaz Kamarudin Sidek, Melaka, 27 January 2010). As an example he depicted how surprised he was when, after one year, more than 20,000 people had already visited his own weblog. Mohamad Nasir Awang, a senior PAS member from Besut (Terengganu) and himself a blogger, however, stressed the ambivalence of new media, which are useful tools for *dakwah*, but would also increase 'social problems' and immorality, concluding: 'They (the Malaysian youth) tend to sneak away from what our religion asks them to do. This is the ICT world. Anything, it's at your fingertips! You can access whatever is posted on the Internet' (interview with Mohd Nasir Awang, Besut, 17 February 2010). Ustaz Mohamad Raslan\*, the former deputy leader of a PAS Youth state-level branch, similarly spoke of 'pros and cons' (interview with Ustaz Mohamad Raslan\*, Perak, February 2010), but emphasized the PAS Youth's pioneering role.

New media also serve to maintain transregional networks, for instance, those established among the PAS Youth's influential PMRAM alumni (see Chapter 3). Ustaz Ashraff\*, a former PMRAM member and Al-Azhar graduate, told me that he remains in contact with Malaysians who spent time with him in Egypt 'via Facebook, e-mail, Yahoo Messenger', and also with students who are currently studying there—I get information from them and

they tell me what's happening there' (interview with Ustaz Ashraff\*, Seremban, February 2010). Furthermore, he argued that the transparency of the Internet could help PAS to improve its handling of internal differences. As an illustration, he referred to a prominent case, where the PAS Spiritual Leader Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat (2009) published an explosive article on his weblog (blogtokguru.com) in 2009 in which he challenged PAS President Abdul Hadi Awang and the supposed Unity Government faction to resign or hold an Extraordinary General Assembly (*Muktamar Khas Luarbiasa*) on the question whether or not PAS should cooperate with UMNO. The PAS Youth was unhappy with the public manner in which that conflict unfolded, as internal dissent was exposed in cyberspace, and thus asked the senior leaders to be more cautious with their public and especially online behavior (interview with Ustaz Ashraff\*, Seremban, 8 February 2010).

The head of the PAS Youth's Bureau for New Media, Mohamad Sany Hamzan, stressed the increased political awareness that the Internet had supposedly fostered. He told me: 'if you go at night to *Mamak* (Indian Muslim food) stalls like this one, you will see that everybody is surfing the Internet. ... nowadays I see friends who work in Selangor or Kuala Lumpur and do not have any higher education, but deeply care for political developments. This is an atmosphere which did not exist 20 years ago' (interview with Mohd Sany Hamzan, Ampang, 12 February 2010, author's translation). Accordingly, the PAS Youth has its own Bureau for New Media and Political Education (*Jabatan Media Baru dan Pendidikan Politik*) which is responsible for the field of new media activities. Between 2008 and 2009, the Bureau had ten members on the national (*pusat*) level. Its main tasks were providing media training to the PAS Youth AJKs, and enabling them to professionally access and understand new media in a most up-to-date manner. During my fieldwork, it encouraged PAS Youth AJKs to use BlackBerry (Internet-enabled) mobile phones, organized 'strategic *dakwah* training through Facebook' (*latihan dan penggunaan strategi dakwah melalui Facebook*), and arranged activities such as a 'PAS Blogger Convention' (*Konvensyen Blogger PAS*) that was held on 20 December 2009 in Gombak. The Bureau also advised PAS bloggers to use email groups for more closed-level digital networking (*Dewan Pemuda PAS Pusat* 2010: 56–58).

In November 2009, the Bureau founded the PAS Cybertroopers, a 'special force' for the political battle on the Internet. Comparable with commercial activities of international public relations companies, one task of the Cybertroopers was to post strategic 'comments' on weblogs and Facebook pages (*memantau beberapa Blog dan Facebook melalui komen*), 'create and manage issues within new media' (*mencipta dan mengurus isu di media baru*) and 'dominate the thinking of the Malaysian people through new media' (*mendominasi pemikiran rakyat melalui Media Baru*) (*Dewan Pemuda PAS* 2010: 56–58). 'Cybertroopers' is notably an emic term. Before I first came across PAS Cybertroopers, a PAS Youth member had told me that 'UMNO Cybertroopers' were fighting PAS, monitored and collected online materials to be

used against PAS members, and manipulated oppositional Internet activities through various means.<sup>8</sup> Obviously, despite the Internet generally serving as an 'open', interactive, multi-vocal and at times spontaneous medium of discursive interaction, both PAS and UMNO increasingly try to 'manage' these supposedly 'bottom up'-structured spheres of political communication, while the traditional political conflict between PAS and UMNO/BN has turned into online 'information warfare'. Ironically, in an act of mimesis, the PAS Youth Cybertroopers' behavior apparently mirrors some of the methods that it accuses UMNO of using.

However, one observation did not fit well with the narrative that the PAS Youth is the champion of a most up-to-date and professional new media usage. Umar\*, a highly spirited activist in charge of maintaining one of PAS' home-pages at that time cautiously indicated frustrations about the lack of resources and the outdated technological equipment, combined with a non-existent salary that required the computer expert and expectant father to spend all his savings on the party. His requests for urgently needed up-to-date equipment were brought to the leadership, but no improvement materialized. Soon afterward Umar\* was forced to leave this voluntary post for personal reasons and worked elsewhere in order to be able to feed his family, despite remaining a staunch PAS supporter and getting involved in campaigning activities whenever time permitted.

Leaving this case aside, it is clear that enthusiasm for new media has become commonplace in the PAS Youth community. New media are nowadays an essential element of the PAS Youth's discursive practices, both as a communication channel and as a meaningful content itself which shapes the self-perception of embodying a modern Islamic political organization.

During the PAS Youth General Assembly in 2009 I sat together with a group of PAS members from Terengganu. One of them, Shafie Latif\*, was proudly introduced to me by another PAS member as 'one of the TOP bloggers of PAS'. Being a blogger potentially enables PAS members to accumulate significant social capital and develop a distinctive profile among one's peers, as many members regard bloggers as key agents of the contemporary 'Islamic struggle'. Months later, I was able to become better acquainted with Shafie Latif\* in his hometown in a rural area in a northeastern state of Peninsular Malaysia. Despite the fact that his weblog has a catchy English title, he does not speak English and, unlike most higher-ranking PAS Youth functionaries, inevitably speaks with a particularly strong regional accent in Malay. However, when it comes to his Internet activities, he rightfully enjoys the profile of an up-to-date expert about the newest trends of digital communication. This indicates that the roles of PAS bloggers and promoters of digital *dakwah* are by no means limited to the PAS Youth's elitist young urban Islamists with prestigious university backgrounds and high positions within PAS' organizational hierarchy. Instead, young people of different backgrounds, who are literate in new media usage, are able to achieve upward social mobility and receive outstanding nation-wide recognition within the

PAS community for their discursive contributions to the 'struggle'. The Internet is thus neither per se an integrative nor an excluding factor in terms of rural PAS Youth activists.

In sum, the Internet and social networking sites like Facebook build a relatively new and emically meaningful space in which PAS Youth members discursively interact with each other and an identitarian community is constantly reinforced in their everyday life. At the same time, it allows the communication of the PAS' 'Islamic struggle' to the larger public, thereby sidelining the government's control of 'old' mass-media such as television and newspapers. PAS—and particularly its Youth Wing—have arrived in the Internet age with full force. In terms of technology and strategic planning, PAS has become a thoroughly modern Islamist party that works intensely to have its finger on the pulse of the times, though the extent to which new members or voters can indeed be won over through new media remains difficult to judge. What is sure, however, is the remarkable effect that new media have on everyday practices, identity, community life and organizational culture within the PAS Youth in-group itself.

Furthermore, the contents of the blogging and Facebook activities of the PAS Youth leadership clearly indicate that these activities have by no means drowned the support for Ulama Leadership within PAS, or replaced Islamist discourses on divinely legislated state organization. Instead, PAS Youth leaders such as Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi and Nik Abduh are now spreading their hardline anti-pluralist positions and visions for a fully Syariah-based legal order via digital channels on a daily basis, widely applauded by their inter-actively connected community of young followers. The PAS Youth is nowadays media-savvy and technologically modern, but at the same time firmly Islamist in outlook.

### *The campaign against adultery, alcohol and extramarital sex*

The PAS Youth's modernization and professionalization drive also becomes obvious in the way it orchestrates and mass-communicates its 'educational' campaigns and activities. I attended the campaign launch (*pelancaran kempen*) of a nation-wide PAS Youth program against adultery, alcohol and extramarital sex (*Kempen Jauhi Zina, Arak dan Pergaulan Bebas*), which was held in Kuala Lumpur in front of the Central Market building on 13 February 2010. The event was well staged and prepared, and invitations were sent to several newspapers and television stations in advance. While most media representatives arrived on time, the PAS Youth group arrived a little late, but in a closed crowd of roughly 50–60 people, most of whom were wearing uniform green shirts designed with respective campaign logos. A smaller part of the group consisted of approximately 10–15 members from the PAS Youth's volunteer security and welfare group Unit Amal, all of whom were wearing uniform shirts in dark red (their as such declared 'brand color', see text later on in the chapter). Among the participants were PAS Youth key

leaders such as Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi, Azman Shapawi, Ahmad Sabki Yusof, Kamaruzaman Mohamad, Riduan Mohamad Nor, Kamal Ashaari, as well as a few grassroots-members. Unit Amal was also not only represented by 'average' members who distributed brochures, provided 'security/order' or simply 'were there', but also by its national leaders Juhari Osman and Sufian Ibrahim.

The *kempen's* launch started with a common prayer in front of the Central Market's entrance. Locals who were shopping as well as Western tourists in fancy dress that were passing the scene looked at the ardently praying young men all dressed in green and red uniform shirts with apparent irritation and bewilderment. Clearly, the PAS Youth had occupied the area, and appeared in sharp contrast to the environment of the busy rush of fashionable young people and tourists that usually dominate this public space. After a short opening speech, the PAS Youth crowd dispersed to spread their message in the area around the building. Professionally designed 'give-away' bags had been prepared, filled with several missionary 'information' materials. In line with the 'Islamic' corporate colors of PAS, the bags were green and white in color and covered with images of flowers, with *Selamat Datang* and 'Welcome' written in English and Malay on one side and on the other side, the synonymous words *Terima Kasih* and Thank You, combined with an additional sticker with the campaign's title and PAS flag. Inside, there were brochures, an Islamic didactic comic, a sticker which read *Tak Nak! Zina, Arak, Pergaulan Bebas* (I don't want! Adultery, alcohol and extramarital sex) and a brochure calling for the abolishment of the Internal Security Act (ISA). The bags and leaflets were handed to anybody willing to take them, for a period of about 30 minutes. In the meantime, a core group of PAS Youth leaders, comprising Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi, Kamaruzaman Mohamad and Riduan Mohamad Nor, went to young Malays in the surrounding area and tried to talk with them. Among those approached were 'young urban hipsters', Malay girls without headscarves, and stylish young men in their early twenties. The PAS Youth leaders handed the materials to them and started a brief conversation, in which they introduced themselves and their *kempen's* intention, followed by a little small talk. Every step of these conversations was carefully recorded by one of the PAS Youth's photographers. The entourage surrounding the approached *dakwah* targets also comprised an 'embedded' journalist from the PAS newspaper *Harakah*. What I found striking was that while the photos taken at that time may suggest a longer and intensive discussion, these conversations rarely lasted longer than one minute, with the young targets seemingly utilized for pictures, rather than the PAS Youth members engaging in an in-depth discussion with them, let alone listening to their actual views. To me, it appeared that it was more of an attempt to produce materials for public relations and shape the PAS Youth's profile as mass-communicated via its media channels, rather than truly deeper interaction with the actual persons standing in front of them. None of the subjects were asked permission before being photographed or if they agreed to

have their pictures published in PAS media (some of these photographs in fact later appeared on PAS Youth webpages and in the PAS newspaper *Harakah Daily*, see *Harakah Daily*, 1 January 2010). I was reminded of the concept of 'pseudo-events' that, as Daniel Boorstin (1961) argued, are conducted only, or as I would modify it for the present context, primarily, for (mass) media reports.<sup>9</sup> Once the majority of the give-away bags and brochures were handed out, all PAS activists met again at the main entrance of the Central Market, where television cameras had already been installed by the invited local media stations. Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi then gave several television and newspaper interviews and answered the journalists' questions, all while, once again, a great number of photos were taken. In the end, around half of the PAS Youth members who had attended the activity went to a restaurant, *Restoran Yusooif*, a few meters from the Central Market and commonly reviewed the events of the day.

I cannot predict whether any of the *dakwah* targets approached that day will change their life as a result of this 'campaign launch'. What is certain, however, is that this was an experienced exercise in modern political public relations, professionally planned, staged and communicated to a media



Figure 4.1 Urban *dakwah*. PAS Youth Chief Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi (left) approaching a group of young people sitting at a bench. Behind him an embedded photographer

Source: Central Market, Kuala Lumpur, 13 February 2010. Photo by Dominik M. Müller.

audience that was much larger than the few young people who were targeted by the campaign launch at the Central Market. To a significant extent, PAS Youth *dakwah* currently employs modern strategic communication through various forms of mass-media (most notably digital media), even though the Malaysian mediascape still remains widely controlled by the BN government. Here as well, the PAS Youth stands at the forefront of the technological modernization of PAS' *dakwah*. The messages that are communicated during such campaigns, however, remain essentially paternalistic and anti-pluralist, thereby reflecting the self-understanding of the PAS hardliners as the sole authoritative safeguard of truth and morality.

### *To sing or not to sing? PAS' new approach to pop culture*

During the last few years, the PAS Youth regularly made headlines aggressively protesting Western pop music concerts and other perceived inroads of 'bad elements' or 'un-Islamic culture' into Malaysian society. Often hand-in-hand with Islamist NGOs and student organizations like ABIM (Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia), JIL (Jamaah Islah Malaysia), GAMIS (Gabungan Mahasiswa Islam Se-Malaysia) and PMI (Persatuan Mahasiswa Islam), it sometimes succeeded in encouraging organizers to cancel the event or leading the authorities to restrict concerts with additional 'public morality' regulations, such as codes pertaining to dress and on-stage behavior. By conducting passionate protests against local performances by foreign singers such as Rihanna, Avril Lavigne, Inul Daratista, the U.S. rapper Pitbull,<sup>10</sup> the Danish band 'Michael Learns To Rock', and the gay<sup>11</sup> musicians Adam Lambert and Elton John, the PAS Youth even regularly receives attention from international news stations such as BBC, Reuters, AFP, the New York Times, and Der Spiegel, in addition to much wider coverage in Malaysian media.

Despite the PAS Youth's great enthusiasm, such activities met a divided response. Many young Malaysians with no relationship to Islamic organizations found such protests inappropriate. Even within PAS, not everyone was happy with the obsession with protesting against popular concerts, as such protests are unlikely to increase PAS' popularity beyond its support base of already-convinced cadres. From the view of the PAS Youth's young dogmatists, such considerations should not be a factor, as they proclaim to prioritize 'quality votes' (*'undi kualiti'*, Abduh 2008a: 130) over quantitative support arising from opportunistic behavior. For them it is a moral *duty* to firmly protest that is 'un-Islamic' and will thus increase 'social ills'. Being a headline defender of this position, the PAS Youth key functionary Kamaruzaman Mohamad perceives such concerts as sources of an alarming moral decline, which brings people away from God:

If you are afraid of God, you will be afraid of doing bad things. That is why we consistently protest a bad concert. Like Rihanna. ... We are protesting something that is not good for the public. Now we have moral

problems, social problems, bringing in another bad element will make it worse. ... Whether you are an individual, family member, member of the public, the government, in a post of leadership: Islam is the best solution. ... Technically, we have the solution, but now, the technical is not exposed to the public. We are trying our best for that. ... The Rihanna issue, she is not a small issue actually. Because this brings a very bad value to the public. So we disagree with any value that will damage the public, will bring the bad impact to the public, and we will protest that.

(Interview with Kamaruzaman Mohamad, Kuala Lumpur, 18 December 2009)

Young PAS activists' practice of protesting concerts goes back to the 1970s and 1980s, when fueled by the waves of Islamic resurgence, PAS and other local Islamist groups staged demonstrations on campuses in order to ban 'un-Islamic' music performances and other cultural activities. At that time, nothing else but 'Islamic' music genres, sung a capella or with acoustic drum percussions, were deemed permissible.

This, however, is only one side of the story. For the last few years, it is not pop or rock music as such which the PAS Youth condemns to be 'un-Islamic'. Instead, in a remarkable shift, PAS has increasingly opened itself for local pop and rock music. Recently, a regular element of many of its events includes not only bands of the popular Islamic 'pop *nasyid*' genre that emerged since the mid-1990s,<sup>12</sup> but also rock singers with electric guitars, long hair, 'wild' looks, and sometimes savagely designed heavy metal T-shirts. The new line to open PAS up for popular music and arts beyond 'Islamic' genres found increasing acceptance during the last decade, until it finally became an official PAS policy to integrate pop musicians into the party's organizational culture. Since then, PAS has discovered that an impressive and apparently ever-increasing number of rock and pop celebrities are supporters of its 'struggle' and are—more or less—piously practicing Muslims. While an Islamization (or 'pietization') among many musicians seems to have taken place, PAS is conducting a partly interrelated process of 'popization'.

According to my informants, individual pioneers from within PAS Youth elites, such as Muhaimin Sulam and Khairul Faizi, initiated internal discourses and contributed to a structural change in PAS' normative stance on music, until it was finally appropriated by many senior *ulama* and given an authoritative theological justification. The new mainstream position of PAS holds that not only *nasyid*, but also any other modern pop music can be tolerated, as long as the musicians are 'good Muslims', do not have sinful lifestyles (such as drinking alcohol, extramarital sex, etc.), and do not transport immoral messages through their lyrics or stage shows. PAS Youth Central Committee member Mohd Taufiq\* explained to me PAS' new stance by arguing it was actually (local) music and musicians that had changed, 'not PAS' (interview with Mohd Taufiq\*, Kuala Lumpur, 22 January 2010). Despite all emic attempts to emphasize continuity and consistence, it is clear



that PAS has also changed. The new catchword among young PAS activists is 'Islamic entertainment' (*hiburan Islam*), and the PAS Youth's Bureau for Art, Culture and Sports (Lajnah Kebudayaan, Kesenian dan Sukan) is formally responsible for improving the party's profile in this field and thereby making PAS more attractive for the younger generation. Even the ultra-conservative PAS Youth chief Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi (quoted in *The Malaysian Insider*, 22 June 2011, author's translation) now expresses the PAS Youth's stance that 'people need entertainment to help brighten their lives', his modified view adds that only 'extreme entertainment' which 'damages the human mind' must be banned.

This same stance, one which seeks to harmonize Islamist dogmatism and *dakwah* pragmatism, was argued for more colloquially by, Bunyamin\*, a PAS Youth activist who goes by the e-mail nickname *HAMAS\_Mujahid*. As a comment on the video of a music performance by another PAS Youth member, he wrote on his Facebook account: 'Music is not wrong, music is wrong if it is not at the place where it is supposed to be' (posted on Bunyamin's\* personal Facebook profile, 30 June 2011, author's translation). Din Jamaluddin\*, a friend of him then added: 'remember the words of the *Ustaz*, the *Wali Songo*<sup>13</sup> had back then also used music as a tool of *dakwah*' (posted on Din Jamaluddin's\* personal Facebook profile, 30 June 2011, author's translation).

Since PAS has discovered popular music as a potent tool for *dakwah*, local rock superstars like Amy Search, Mel Wings, RENGGO/Arrow, Man John, Sham Kamikaze, Aisyah, XPDC Ali and Isa/Gravity have repeatedly performed at PAS events. Despite the fact that this was unimaginable twenty or thirty years ago, nowadays any PAS General Assembly will be accompanied by a colorful entertainment program that includes rock/pop musicians and other 'celebrities'. In accordance with PAS' turn toward modern 'entertainment', the General Assembly in 2009 even used computer-produced atmospheric sounds and artificial smoke as special effects. At another event that I attended, the PAS Youth used artificial green smoke, in line with PAS' branded corporate identity. While many of the rock musicians who perform at PAS events are senior celebrities, who have been known for decades and have only recently started to openly support PAS, a few others such as the rocker RENGGO/Arrow come from a younger generation. In 2009, he even decided to become a PAS Youth member, with the then 78-year old PAS Spiritual Leader Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat proudly attending the singer's well-staged party entrance ceremony.<sup>14</sup> Nik Aziz was also said to have developed a close personal relationship with the Malay rock legend Amy Search, with pictures of him welcoming the singer, as well as snapshots of both praying together that were widely circulated in the PAS mediascape.<sup>15</sup> The list of such celebrities, including also numerous actors, both male and female, who joined PAS in recent years could be enlarged. Some celebrities, such as the singer and actor Haryati Hamzah, have staged their conversion to PAS-style Islam at public PAS events, with an emotional mix of tears, prayers, singing and

'right-guided' laughter. The female singer Aisyah (alias Aisyah Wan Aishah binti Wan Ariffin) finally even became a PAS candidate in the General Elections of 2013. The pro-PAS rock musicians and movie stars seem to consciously offer themselves to be instrumentalized for the party's public relations work, while they serve as agents, tools and receivers of PAS' *dakwah* at the same time. When the aged rock superstar Amy Search, who repeatedly declared himself to be a 'fan of Nik Aziz' ('*Saya peminat Tok Guru Nik Aziz*', see Jiwo Kelate Weblog 2009), opened the Muslim Chinese restaurant *Cheng Ho* in Wangsa Maju, Nik Aziz was one of the special guests attending the opening event—an advertising coup and 'win-win' situation for both sides, in terms of publicity and their respective interests.<sup>16</sup> In November 2009, the PAS parliamentarian Hatta Ramli invited me to this restaurant. During our car ride from Parliament to Wangsa Maju, while local rock music played on the radio, he enthusiastically told me how close PAS and several local rock singers had finally become, and how positively he, as a friend of good music, evaluated this development.

The PAS Youth key leader and modernizer Khairul Faizi Ahmad Kamil<sup>17</sup> shared his personal ambivalent relationship to music, which on the micro-level mirrors the macro development of PAS' recently changing stance at large. During his early days as an undergraduate student, Khairul Faizi had played music in a band. He also wrote lyrics for a cousin who was a popular singer at that time under the artist name '*Arab*'. However, as his involvement in the *harakah Islamiyyah* on campus and beyond increased, Khairul, who originates from the 'UMNO heartland' Johor and was not socialized in a PAS family, distanced himself from such music and stopped his involvement for years. With PAS gradually opening itself for modern genres of music several years later, Khairul realized that Islam-conforming pop and rock music could benefit the 'Islamic movement's' *dakwah*, if adequate boundaries were set. Nowadays, he is at the forefront of forging contacts with musicians for PAS. Recently, he himself also repeatedly performed with a guitar and sang at PAS events. Unlike the senior party, which primarily invites rock stars known nation-wide to its events, Khairul is developing additional networks with less-known grassroots bands. He wants the PAS Youth to provide an open door for young musicians who share an interest in modern music or adhere to sub-cultures that were previously regarded to be incompatible with PAS.

Furthermore, in the case of a PAS 'jamming studio' in Johor, Khairul Faizi has even led the party to provide space for young Muslim musicians to play and produce rock music within a PAS Youth-controlled framework. Khairul told me that in order to ensure that his boss Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi was comfortable with contemporary Malaysian youth popular culture realities, he took the latter to the 'jamming studio', where long-haired PAS supporters played hard rock. The *ulama*-style dressed PAS Youth Chief Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi was provided an electric guitar which he held, posing for pictures to be circulated via PAS blogs and social media. Since then, the PAS Youth chief appeared more often with a guitar in his hand at PAS Youth events.

Such activities of exposing *ulama* to the lifeworld realities of Malaysian youth and producing pictures that depict young *ulama* in a sheer pop star-like manner have become a common activity since 2010. One of the first public actions that the PAS Youth leadership conducted after Khairul Faizi became its secretary general in June 2011 was a visit, together with the PAS Youth chief and around twenty of their compatriots, to a heavy metal concert in the Chow Kit area of Kuala Lumpur, not far from the PAS Headquarters. Again, numerous pictures documented this activity in order to stage the PAS Youth's pop-cultural openness and commitment.<sup>18</sup>

Around the same time, Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi, who had been, one year earlier, seen by many to be overly distanced from the average Malaysian youth in terms of his public appearance, now declared in an interview that the PAS Youth wished to work together with more local and 'underground' bands from the *kawasan* level ('*band-band tempatan*'; '*band-band anak muda di peringkat kawasan*'; '*yang ada bersifat underground*'). This would help to 'attract the attention of local youngsters' ('*menarik perhatian anak-anak muda setempat*').<sup>19</sup> In contrast to his usually deeply theology-centered rhetoric, this statement showed that even many of the most hardline dogmatists in terms of Islamist state-organization have accepted, and seek to actively push forward, PAS' cultural popization.

At the same time, however, the PAS Youth activists combine this new pop-cultural approach with their quest for classical Islamist targets in a pop-Islamist manner, as the following case perfectly illustrates: In December 2011, the hardliners within the PAS Youth leadership released a professionally produced 'short film' (*filem pendek*) which was circulated via YouTube and seeks to advertise *hudud* laws. Among the film's actors is the PAS Youth Chief Hassan Nasrudin Tantawi himself, wearing a white Muslim skull-cap (*kopiah*), holding a guitar in his hand, and sitting in the middle of other PAS Youth *ulama*, including Riduan Mohamad Nor, Nik Mohamd Abduh and Syed Abdul Kadir Al-Joofre, along the perimeter of a soccer(!) field. In the same clip, a famous former actor and musician, Bob Lokman, and a local rock singer from the 1980s, Man John, play the role of young men to whom the PAS Youth *ulama* explain what Islamic penal code, *hudud*, 'truly' means and why Muslims are obliged to implement this key element of Islamist legal ideology. In addition, the young *ulama* emphasize only qualified religious experts, like themselves, should be consulted on matters pertaining to Islam, detailing also their study backgrounds at renowned Islamic universities abroad. As a bonus, Bob Lokman and Man John also perform a short song during the ten-minute long film. Here, pop appeal and 'classic Islamist' political targets are combined, while popization is used as a strategy for this target's envisioned realization. The clip was entitled in the language of soccer fans as *Oley!! Hudud Allah* (see YouTube 2011b). After only two days, it had been watched 16,000 times on YouTube. It was also circulated via PAS Youth weblogs and its Facebook service *Harakah Muda*. As of May 2013, there were more than 235,000 views, and, according to a PAS Youth source, *Oley II* was in the stage of planning.

Although PAS repeatedly condemned the ‘worship of artists’ (*puja artis*), as, for example, stated in a PAS Youth banner in 2008 (see Kami Generasi Muda Bencikan Maksiat 2011) it now exploits the magnetism of celebrities. The underlying conflict became obvious when participants of *Akademi Fantasia*, a casting show modelled after *American Idol*, expressed their support for PAS. The show was initially condemned by PAS *ulama* to ‘deviate’ from Islam (*New Straits Times*, 16 September 2005). Once it became known that one of its winners, Mawi, is a PAS supporter, the party suddenly integrated Mawi: he performed at PAS events and met with Nik Aziz. Although *Akademi Fantasia*’s success is rooted in the veneration for artists, with the winners being elected via telephone, the problem remains that PAS rejects such ‘artist worship’ but exploits them for political purposes. An emic response is that sympathy for persons who use their popularity for advertising ‘God’s cause’ should not be confused with worshipping. In any case, the underlying theological debates remain contested.

Inspired by the party’s new line, not only are musicians increasingly integrated into PAS’ strategy, several PAS Youth members have also started to make music. In Chapter 3, we came to know the PAS Youth Selangor’s firebrand Ustaz Zulkifli Ahmad (not to be confused with the senior PAS’ Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad, who goes by almost the same name) as a hot-blooded, aggressively shouting young hardliner, who opposes any distancing from PAS’ classical Islamist political goals. However, the Al-Azhar graduate (degree in Syariah Law) and former PMRAM leader exhibited a more melodic side of himself when he passionately performed as a singer, accompanied by a guitar player at a PAS event in 2011.<sup>20</sup> At another PAS Youth event, *Gua Rock Gua Beriman* (I rock, I am pious), he performed music together with some of his friends, including a white-robed and *kopiah*-wearing PAS Youth member playing Arabic-inspired guitar tunes under the banner of ‘pious rock’ (*rock beriman*) (for the video, see YouTube 2011a). More recently, he also sang on television shows, where he, like other PAS Youth *ulama*, presents himself as a ‘free preacher’ (*pendakwah bebas*) rather than a PAS politician. Videos of his music performances are widely shared via social media in the PAS Youth community. Obviously, the young religious scholar is firmly dogmatic when it comes to questions of Islamist legal state organization, but open to, and even passionately involved in, normative changes of the party’s line on modern popular culture.

I witnessed the great interest of young PAS grassroots supporters in rock and pop music shows at several PAS events. At a PAS Youth meeting in Kubu Gajah (Perak) in 2010, I found it insightful to see that while a young *nasyid* band evoked little response from the audience, the scene thoroughly changed when the aged pro-PAS ‘rock *hala!*’ superstar Mel Wings entered the stage. Upon his arrival, a much larger crowd of young people swarmed the front of the stage despite the scorching midday heat. This may indicate that the new PAS strategy could indeed be quite effective for widening their clientele and developing a more welcoming and ‘contemporary’ modern profile in order to mobilize new cadres among the younger generation.

Notably, female PAS activists have embraced the pop-Islamist reinvention of PAS as well. The Women's Wing's chief, Siti Zailah Mohd Yusoff, declared that her wing wants to intensify its efforts in exploiting the appeal of celebrity personalities in order to change the people's perception of PAS as a 'party that rejects entertainment' (*parti yang menolak hiburan*) (*Harakah Daily*, 14 November 2012). She argued that this would reduce 'fears' among people who were previously reluctant to approach PAS. Siti Zailah Mohd Yusoff explained to her followers at the Women's Wing's General Assembly in 2012 that young women often made celebrities their idols (*idola*), and that PAS should utilize this phenomenon in order to strengthen the party, rather than categorically condemning it.

The PAS Youth's formation of the Bureau for Arts, Sports and Culture, followed by a respective bureau in the senior party in 2010, was a key step of institutionalizing the new popization approach, and is one more example of the PAS Youth's function as a pioneer of political and cultural changes within the party. However, the change in terms of permissible popular culture also suggests a considerable degree of uncertainty. Apparently, PAS is under pressure to adapt itself to social realities, and cannot uphold certain dogmatist positions of the past if it wants to mobilize a wider support base. Like other social movements, PAS 'faces the task of mobilizing the support and resources of individuals with a variety of different beliefs and levels of motivation for collective action' (Munson 2001: 499). It is also against this backdrop, that PAS' opening to modern popular culture can be understood.

The post-*reformasi* influx of many new young members into PAS, often urban or semi-urban, with professional and university backgrounds, has amplified the opening for music and art genres which were previously condemned. Furthermore, the party's attempts to be seen as a 'government-in-the-waiting' has led PAS to search for new ways to be accepted beyond its traditional constituencies in the largely rural 'Malay Belt' (Kelantan, Terengganu, Perlis, Kedah) or certain established PAS strongholds in Selangor. Therefore, the partial opening to popular culture was a logical step to cast PAS as a fully *syariat Islam*-defending but also mainstream modern Islamic party, in line with its new slogan 'PAS For All/*PAS Untuk Semua*'.

UMNO, too, tries to exploit popular culture for its political goals, and yet another variant of the peculiar battle between PAS and UMNO seems to emerge. In a surprising twist, in 2012 several musicians joined UMNO, among them the previous pro-PAS musician Amy Search. The former 'fan of Nik Aziz' (see earlier), who stated that 'Nik Aziz is my teacher' (Ar-Rifke Weblog 2010, author's translation) in 2010, now declared that 'UMNO also upholds Islam but not in an extreme way. The UMNO also does not sideline *ulama* in the administration' (*Malaysiakini*, 29 May 2012). Whatever the musicians' motivation may have been,<sup>21</sup> apparently, the PAS-UMNO competition is expanding towards a *popization race*, in which both parties battle over the most efficient exploitation of popular culture. Paradoxically, this popization race happens simultaneously with their 'piety trumping' (Liow

2009: 13), as both parties try hard to integrate diverse identities in order to mobilize the widest possible support base.

In sum, PAS' new behavior toward modern music and popular culture is another case where the PAS Youth substantially pushed forward the transformation of normative orders within PAS, with questions about modern and more effective *dakwah* strategies and conformity with Islam being at the heart of this very recent development. Here, PAS has shown its potential flexibility when it comes to the interpretation of supposedly stable divine orders at different times by different hegemonial actors within the party. This flexibility seems to be particularly strong when it comes to finding new strategies in order to win over the souls and votes of wider parts of the young population for the 'Islamic struggle'. This new opening toward contemporary popular culture is, of course, interrelated with larger developments within society, with PAS reacting to trends, and the party's inner normative contestations often mirroring wider social tendencies. Against this backdrop, the present PAS Youth elites and especially the neo-conservative young dogmatists find themselves caught in a paradox: on one side, they regard their dogmatist credo of the 'Purification of the Struggle' (*Murnikan Perjuangan*, Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi's leading slogan) and rejection of pragmatic compromise to be of highest normative priority, while on the other, the social realities and requirements of *dakwah realpolitik* leave them little alternative but to become more flexible toward popular cultural elements which at the beginning of PAS' Ulama Leadership era were condemned to be incompatible with 'pure' Islam. To resolve this problem, in the field of music they stress the musicians' Islam-conformed lifestyles and their usefulness for *dakwah*, while leaving aside the older PAS generation's once hegemonial stance that only traditional *nasyid* music with Islamic lyrics, sung a capella, accompanied by acoustic music instruments without sound amplifiers, was permissible according to 'pure' Islamic teachings. Apparently, the purist PAS Young Turks of the past had in some aspects a different understanding of Islamic 'purity' than the young dogmatists today. Nevertheless, there is no indication that such pragmatic opening for popular culture would undermine the PAS Youth's passionate insistence on core goals of Islamism such as an Islamic State order based on codified Syariah law, including Islamic penal code (*hudud/qisas*), with an unequal legal status for Muslims/non-Muslims and men/women, and categorical rejection of Muslim pluralism. Furthermore, although the PAS Youth's pop-cultural practices may appear rather profane to outside observers, it is important to keep in mind that the activists who are conducting these activities are deeply pious young men who use this strategy first and foremost to reach religio-political targets. It must be stressed that these pop-Islamist activities, which the actors themselves frame in Islamic terminology as *dakwah*, by no means replace other, more classical activities of Islamic missionary outreach (*dakwah*) and education (*tarbiyah*).

Given that PAS' previous attempts to take over the national government have failed, the PAS Youth seems to have identified 'the importance of tactics

to the ability of social movement organizations to generate resources' (Munson 2001: 503) in the field of popular culture. Particularly its young, media-savvy strategists try to mobilize new supporters by 'linking' (Munson 2001: 503) themselves to pre-existing social structures and cultural trends among their *dakwah*-target groups, and (re-)framing the party's 'Islamic struggle' respectively. In social movement theory, the concept of framing 'refers to the interpretations of events provided by social movement organizations that are intended to resonate with the beliefs' (ibid.: 500) of already existing or prospective supporters. This is precisely the strategy that the PAS Youth is following with its new approach to popular culture.

### **Negotiating anti-Westernism and Islamic consumption: the religious marketization of PAS**

One topic which, except for a brief but insightful mention by Farish Noor (2004b: 624–25), has yet to be addressed in the literature on PAS is a phenomenon that I came across during my fieldwork rather unexpectedly: the large-scale marketization and commodification of PAS and its 'Islamic struggle'. This currently sheer omnipresent development in the party's everyday culture falsifies increasingly outdated (but far from defeated) ideas like the hand-in-hand relationship between modernization and secularization, or 'anti-modern' or even 'medieval' theses vis-à-vis Islamist political movements like PAS.<sup>22</sup> PAS is in many ways a modern party, and both subject and agent of the massive marketization that is increasingly characteristic for contemporary Islam in Malaysia, as the following sections on PAS' negotiation between anti-Westernism and Islamic marketization will demonstrate.

### ***Criticisms of capitalism, materialism and the West in PAS discourse***

There is wide consensus within PAS that its 'Islamic struggle' is opposed to materialism (*maddiyyah/kebendaan*) and Western-style capitalism. Consumption mentality is normatively regarded a negative influence which was brought into Malaysia by 'Western culture', a contaminative threat to pure Islamic values and especially the youth's morality. Such 'man-made' influences from 'Western culture' have been labeled by PAS Youth leader Ustaz Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi as *jahiliyah moden* (modern *jahiliyah*) (Tantawi 2010b: no page). Carrying a negative connotation, the Islamic term *jahiliyah* (literally: 'ignorance' or 'barbarism') describes the time before the revelation of Islam through Prophet Muhammad. In PAS discourse, *jahiliyah* also refers to contemporary and 'modern' issues that are perceived as deviations from the rightly guided Islamic path.<sup>23</sup>

Notwithstanding PAS' normative rejection of Western-style *jahiliyahtic* capitalism, Islamic entrepreneurial practices, and marketized categories of thinking are widely popular within the party's community. PAS largely depends on donations from its supporters, and its members take pride in

being a financially self-empowered organization where the supporters 'give everything' to the party. In their view, this is in contrast to UMNO/BN supporters who would constantly 'receive' material benefits for their opportunistic political activism. 'Islamic' commercial activities within the PAS community are emically understood to be essentially different from Western-style capitalism, with the Prophet Muhammad himself serving as a legitimizing ideal model for successful ethical Islamic entrepreneurship in line with Islamic Law. Nowadays, numerous PAS and PAS Youth politicians are businessmen, and in some cases even run several companies. In addition to growing involvement in commercial activities, Islamic consumption and party-specific commodification have become an integral part of the party's culture. Not only has an increasingly diversified set of 'PAS merchandise' (Müller 2010: 764, 74–75) become a visible element of PAS events, both in terms of sales practices and expressive consumption, but a marketized shift in thinking and wording can also be observed particularly among the well-educated younger party elites. As I will illustrate in the sections on NISA' and Unit Amal (see later), some PAS members have started to frame their 'Islamic struggle' in a particular form of modern business language.

In PAS leaders' speeches, materialism and capitalism are often labeled as un-Islamic, while many of them traditionally depict their party's 'Islamic struggle' to be anti-capitalist in nature. During a speech at the PAS Youth General Assembly in 2007, the former PAS Youth Chief and current PAS Deputy President (*naib presiden*), Salahuddin Ayub, spoke of the danger of 'demagogues', who were 'political parasites' and connected to 'feudalism, autocracy and capitalism' (Ayub 2007, no page, author's translation). Similarly, in his anything but post-Islamist book *Usaha Jahat Yahudi* (The Evil Efforts of Jews), PAS President Abdul Hadi Awang (quoted in *Harakah Daily*, 1 December 2008) argued that 'the Jews' tried to 'make Muslims become infidels' (*orang Yahudi berusaha supaya orang Islam menjadi kafir*), adding that it was 'always Jews or Christians' who had created man-made concepts such as capitalism. When writing about an alleged 'war of thoughts' (*serangan pemikiran*) that the Muslim youth is facing from numerous different enemies who seek to 'destroy Islam' (*menghancurkan Islam*), PAS Youth leader Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi (2010b, no page) spoke of the West as one of the top five sources of anti-Islamic evil.<sup>24</sup> In his elaborations about why and how the West tried to destroy Islam, in addition to other arguments, he stated that the West had created the manmade principles of human organization such as capitalism, which were opposed to the God-made order that pious Muslims were obliged to struggle for. Man-made 'secularist' concepts such as capitalism, he argued, distanced Muslims from their religion (Tantawi 2010b, author's translation). Therefore, the Muslim youth should liberate itself from such destructive influences that Western culture had brought to Malaysia.

The self-conceptualization of opposing Western capitalism and materialism within PAS discourses is also in line with a stance that normatively rejects consumerism. In an informal conversation, Mohd Taufiq\*, an influential PAS Youth member who works as a lecturer criticized that in recent times large



numbers of young people dressed in 'Islamic' clothes attend Islamic *nasyid* concerts on campus, whereas at Islamic discussions, only a handful of them can be noted in the audience and even fewer actively participate (conversation with Mohd Taufiq\*, Kuala Lumpur, January 2010). He concluded that the actual missionary (*dakwah*) purpose of *nasyid* music was turned upside-down if it led to a 'consumption mentality', whereby being a Muslim meant little more than pushing the buttons of music players or wearing the right 'pious' clothes. This illustrates that although consumption and commerce in an appropriated, 'moralized' form are harmonized with Islam in PAS discourse, this does not always occur without tension. According to the Dutch anthropologist Bart Barendregt (2008a: 25), some Muslims in Southeast Asia question, against the backdrop of an increasing commercialization of Islamic popular culture 'if God is nowadays for sale'. However, within the PAS Youth community, such questions are not frequently heard. Instead, within the PAS Youth a widespread passion for 'Islamic products' in general and PAS-related products in particular is observable.

As the inner life of the organization is not isolated from its surroundings, the PAS Youth's consumption is embedded in the larger Malaysian social context. As Hoffstaedter (2011: 178) points out, 'consumer markets for Islamic goods and services are booming and have become part of Malay Muslim lifeworlds'. This is related to the institutionalized *halalization* (and subsequent '*haramization*', see Peletz 2011: 137) of Malaysian society, which, as Fischer (2008: 29–32) illustrates in great ethnographic depth, becomes constantly pushed forward by both the state and the market. In fact, the rise of local *halal* (Islamically permissible) markets has been intensely supported by the UMNO-led government under Mahathir since the 1980s, and was supplemented by passionate 'alternative' Islamic commercial activities like those of the Al-Arqam movement, which was banned for 'deviant teachings' in 1994 (but now continues to operate as a commercial organization under new names such as Global Ikhwan). Such *halalization*, as indeed any 'Islamization', '*syariahtization*' or 'desecularization', is not a monolithic and homogenous process (Peletz 2011: 143, 147), but instead takes on a particular shape in particular groups, such as PAS, and has its own specific complexities on the micro-level.

The first of such complexities is represented in contrasts between normative ideal discourse and the realities of everyday life. A closer look reveals that under the conditions of present-day social realities, the situation in daily life becomes more complicated on the ground than the sloganeering of Islamist groups in Malaysia might suggest. Among the communities of several local Islamist organizations, calls for the boycott of Western and allegedly Israel- or US-linked brands and consumer goods frequently arise (Fischer 2007; Müller 2009: 39–41). Although PAS is far from the only Malaysian group that makes such calls, the Islamic Party, and particularly its Youth Wing, is usually involved at the forefront of such initiatives. One of the latest peaks of boycott campaigns took place in the aftermath of 'Operation Cast Lead', when the Israeli army undertook a three-week-long military attack on the Islamist party HAMAS (Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiyyah) in Gaza, starting on

27 December 2008. This led to a huge wave of protest and campaigns of solidarity in Malaysia. Numerous highly emotional demonstrations were staged by PAS (Müller 2010: 774), and boycott calls for 'Israel-related' products were distributed through all available channels of communication. Lists of brands were announced through banners, brochures, webpages, and audio-visual media (Müller 2010: 775–76). Three of these brands, two of which PAS has repeatedly called to boycott for numerous years (see, for example, Isa 2003), were McDonalds, Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) and Colgate. When, in January 2010, I was sitting in a car with Yusri\* and Asri\*, two PAS Youth members from Johor\*, both of whom were personally close to a high-ranking PAS Youth leader who introduced me to them, I was surprised to see a McDonalds give-away figure on the dashboard of their car. A few days later, when we were passing by a local McDonalds restaurant on foot, I asked Yusri\* and Asri\* whether they liked McDonalds, and what their position on the PAS boycotts was. Yusri\* smiled and answered: 'sometimes we boycott, sometimes not' (informal conversation with Yusri\* and Asri\*, Johor, 28 January 2010). This reconfirms Fischer's observation that even though such calls to boycott 'have become central to the political struggle over the political arena in Malaysia', in lifeworld realities 'boycotting is totally personal' (Fischer 2008: 43, 47). Many individuals, including firmly 'Islamist' PAS political activists, struggle to negotiate their supposed obligations of moral consumption and proper Islamic behavior.

In March 2009, a lecturer of a Malaysian university told me that Colgate was closely related to the 'Zionist regime', and that the company's income funded the murder of Palestinian children. PAS, too, had Colgate high on its list, just like several other boycotters (Müller 2009: 41). However, at a Health Day (*Hari Kesihatan*) organized by PAS in Bandar Tun Razak, where free healthcare was offered to the local community and where in the course of participant observation my health was thoroughly checked, I was surprised to find Colgate toothpaste in the bag that was handed out by a PAS member to all participants after their medical check-up. Given such experiences, I was no longer surprised when a PAS AJK member suggested that I meet him inside a Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurant in Ampang, and another PAS activist told me about his passion for Starbucks. Obviously, despite their normative awareness of the 'ethical responsibility to boycott' (Fischer 2008: 43), in the negotiated realities of everyday life these boycotts are much more flexible and fluid than a distant observer who reads about the PAS' anti-Western boycotts and anti-capitalist proclamations might expect.

### ***Material culture in a political Islamic environment: the PAS commoditiescape***

There are no items of clothing ... or of other practical use which we do not seize upon as theatrical props to dramatise the way we want to present our roles and the scene we are playing in.

(Douglas 1996: 101)

Not only the complexities on the personal level, but also the commercialization and commodification of PAS' struggle itself sheds light on the heterogeneity of the modern *syariahtization* process in Malaysia, and how this process can accommodate *both* the 'second wave Islamist' turn toward lifestyle-orientation and a firm insistence on 'classical Islamist' political targets. At the sales stalls which are a typical element of many PAS events, a wide range of PAS and PAS-related consumer goods are normally offered. These products are most popular among the younger segments of the PAS community. Particularly among the PAS Youth, an integral part of its organizational and event culture seems to be that many of its members (religio-)politically dress up and, by making use of 'the symbolic medium of the physical body' (Douglas 1996: 129), express their belonging to PAS and the—national as well as transnational—'Islamic movement' through the communication channel of visible consumption. Such performative identity processes and 'symbolic acts' (ibid.: 62) of political consumption serve to establish and concretize belonging and belief, and, as the anthropologist Mary Douglas has pointed out in another context, have both an including and an excluding formative social capacity (see Douglas and Isherwood 1979).

Ironically, to some extent mirroring the corporate commodities of its political rival UMNO, the well-designed respective consumer goods of PAS include shirts, jackets, shawls, head-ties, umbrellas, pens, key-rings, stickers, wrist watches and large green wall clocks, many of which carry colorful PAS logos or iconizing portraits of its leaders, most notably Spiritual Leader Nik Aziz. There are two broad categories of such products: First those that show the official PAS logo—a white full-moon on a green background. They are in some cases combined with an older red-and-white PAS flag, and the letters 'PAS', or Parti Islam Se-Malaysia (often also written in Arabic calligraphy), sometimes supplemented by additional branch names. The second category depicts symbols which are indirectly connected to PAS and its ideological identity, but do not carry any PAS logo. For in-group members, their relatedness to PAS' 'Islamic movement' is nevertheless obvious. They are usually sold at the same stalls that offer products of the first category, and are consumed on display mode by the same people who buy the products of the first type. The massive sale and consumption of the goods of both categories is a vital site for the social realization of PAS' corporate identity, and notwithstanding its specific local conditionedness, also resembles comparable branding phenomena and commodifications of commercial actors, popular sports clubs and music groups in the age of modern capitalist globalization all over the world.<sup>25</sup>

Besides goods that depict PAS logos, such as stickers, shirts, jackets, Muslim skullcaps (*kopiah*), bags, watches, clocks, head- and mouth-ties, umbrellas and pens, there are other products that refer to branch names, or certain campaigns (*kempen*), such as *Orang Muda Geng Kita* (The Youth is Our Gang). These campaign shirts are sold to raise funds, but are also distributed for free at certain events in order to stage a visually well-orchestrated appearance, such as at the launch of the *Kempen Jauhi Zina, Arak dan Pergaulan Bebas*

(Campaign to stay away from adultery, alcohol, and extramarital sex, compare earlier text). At this particular event, all PAS Youth members wore identical green campaign shirts. A sewed logo was present on the front of the t-shirts that stated *katakan TAK NAK!* (say [I] DON'T WANT!), *Zina* (adultery), *Arak* (alcohol), and *Pergaulan Bebas* (extramarital sex), supplemented by respective graphics. On the backside of the shirts, the same logo was printed in a larger form, accompanied with a script naming the campaign's initiator, the PAS Youth's Bureau for Dakwah and the Defense of Islam.

For the PAS Youth's Meeting of 10,000 Youths (*Himpunan 10,000 Pemuda*) event that I attended in Kubu Gajah (Perak), thousands of shirts had been prepared. There were two different types, both in the same green color: One depicted the *Orang Muda Geng Kita* slogan and the face of the local PAS leader Nizar Jamaluddin (whom I met while he was wearing the shirt depicting himself); and a second with the statement, '*Jentera Pilihanraya Pemuda PAS Perak*' (Election Machinery of the PAS Youth Perak), referring to snap elections for the state of Perak that PAS had hoped for at that time but that due to a later Supreme Court decision did not materialize. Some participants had brought, or bought at the event's PAS merchandise stalls, their own 'PAS wear', which differed from the event-specific campaign look, with a wide range of PAS clothes on bodily display for men, women and children.

At the PAS Youth General Assembly in 2010, all delegates on stage wore another event-specific form of 'PAS wear'. Despite being in line with the principle of corporate branding conformity, it left some space for individual difference; PAS Youth leader Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi wore an additional turban and a fancy green skirt, whereas most of the other AJKS were wearing a white PAS-logoed Muslim skullcap (*kopiah*). By theatrically consuming PAS wear, individuals make use of the capacity of clothing as an 'expressive medium', a 'means of communication' (McCracken 1988: 71), and the outward expression of inward ideas, although, in the case of wearing a turban yet another mode of communication comes into play. Within the PAS community, there is a widespread belief that wearing of a turban can be regarded as *Sunnah* (imitating the lifestyle of the Prophet Muhammad), and while this particular part of the *Sunnah* is not compulsory, it is believed that it helps one collect so-called *pahala*, reward points that will, 'God willing' (*Insya'allah*), be taken into consideration on Judgment Day (*hari akhirat*). In that sense, besides worldly communication and social symbolic practice, wearing the PAS turban also serves as a medium to communicate with God and work toward the afterlife (*akhirat*).

An additional category of identitarian products which are part of commodified material culture in the PAS Youth community are 'Islamic' mobile media. Over the last decade, in Southeast Asia and elsewhere, items of non-Western modernity such as digital Qur'ans and 'Islamic' mobile phones have become popular. Such phones usually contain Qur'anic verses (in both audio and written form), *hadith*, *tafsir* (exegesis), a call-for-prayer alarm, Islamic ringtones, and more.<sup>26</sup> The *Myiman*-branded Muslim phone, for example, is

available in the identitarian colors green (= Muslim, male) and pink (= female). Such phones have been on the market since 2004, and are sold by several brands.<sup>27</sup> Within PAS circles they are increasingly visible, symbolizing not only Islamic upward social mobility and 'cool' piety, but also allowing their users to materialize their share in a certain modern 'Islamic chic' (Murray 1991; cf. Barendregt 2008b: 161) through the communicative practice of expressive commodity consumption. During my research, a locally prominent PAS member from Terengganu, Haji Mohamad Idris\*, sold *Myiman* phones produced in China. During one of our meetings at a café in Besut, he gave one as a gift to the former PAS Youth leader and now party veteran, Ustaz Abu Bakar Chik (known within PAS circles as 'Ustaz ABC'). Apparently, the openness and enthusiasm for modern Islamic gadgets and related marketization activities are not limited to young people.

In 2010, PAS pushed the Muslim mobile phone genre to a new level: it brought out the first political-Islamic mobile phone, the PAS phone. The PAS phone was launched at the PAS General Assembly in 2010 by PAS President Abdul Hadi Awang and Secretary General Mustafa Ali. The phone's overall look is distinguishable by the presence of the PAS flag's white full-moon on a green background. Produced by Telesign Communication for PAS, it contains Qur'anic verses in 24 languages (including Malay, Arabic, English, Tamil and Thai), as well as 30 *tafsir* and *hadith* collections, a list for daily prayers, the prayer times for four different Islamic legal schools (*madhab*)—as well as a *kiblat*-finder that can locate the prayer-direction to Mecca from 10,000 regions worldwide. Additionally, the consumer can enjoy a collection of 13 Islamic *nasyid* songs, 12 'Islamic video' clips, and a list of '99 names for Allah'. The clue beyond its 'religious' and technical functions is its 'political' character, which goes beyond its design. It contains information about PAS, its history, all previous PAS presidents, an address list of PAS offices, the conditions for becoming a PAS member as well as an explanation of the rights and duties that go along with PAS membership. Mokhtar Rozaidi, a PAS activist who was also head of advertising (*pengurus iklan*) at PAS' newspaper *Harakah*, was also responsible for advertising this phone. At the PAS General Assembly 2010, it was sold to party members in capitalist language at the 'promotional rate' (*promosi*) of 359 RM (80 Euro) instead of RM 449 (100 Euro).

The PAS phone reflects the enthusiasm of young PAS activists for the creative use of the newest technologies as tools of modern political communication and *dakwah*. During my conversations with PAS Youth members about the role of the Youth Wing, one of the most frequent answers provided was that they were currently responsible for new media. Together with the case of the 'PAS phone', this frequency exemplifies how new technologies, at times embedded into PAS-specific marketization, have taken root in the middle of organizational culture within the PAS community, with the young generation playing a key role in that essentially modern process.



Figure 4.2 PAS Youth grassroots supporters dressed in various forms of 'corporate' PAS wear

Source: Kubu Gajah, 31 January 2010. Photo by Dominik M. Müller.

Various products which are only indirectly linked to PAS, but from an emic point of view are directly related to its larger 'struggle' and 'movement', glorify the Palestinian cause and HAMAS, reinforce the image of 'Jewish', 'Zionist' or 'Israeli' enemies, or address the transnational 'Islamic community' (*umat Islam*).<sup>28</sup> The producers of the VCD *Kekejaman Israel 2009—Gaza Berdarah* (Israel's Cruelty 2009—Bleeding Gaza), who belong to the PAS Youth branch from Sungei Petani, made use of—or transformatively appropriated—original scenes of martial propaganda videos produced by HAMAS, rearranged with Malay subtitles. In that VCD, which was available for sale, Malaysians were asked to support Palestine in any form, including moral support through prayers, financial support, and by boycotting certain brands that were allegedly related to Israel. One shirt that was sold at PAS events depicted the HAMAS logo, combined with a masked fighter holding a machine gun. On its reverse, a slogan clarified: *Supporter HAMAS*. Similarly, headbands referring to Palestine are often worn demonstratively at larger PAS events. Another such shirt carried the face of iconic HAMAS founder, Ahmad Yassin. On the reverse, a slogan states: *INGAT! INGAT YAHUDI AKAN KHAIBAR. TENTERA MUHAMMAD AKAN DATANG!* (Remember! Remember the Jew(s) will be defeated. The army of Muhamad will

arrive!). The term *Khaibar* refers to a battle between the army of Prophet Muhammad and a group of Jews over the oasis of Khaibar in 628 AD, in which, despite being outnumbered, Muhammad's troops 'gloriously' defeated the Jewish group. Khaibar also serves as a precedent case in Islamic Law. Once the Jewish group surrendered, they were granted the status of a protected minority. At PAS Youth demonstrations, the synonymous Arabic phrase *Khaibar, Khaibar, Ya Yahud, Jaish Muhammad Safayood* (Khaibar, Khaibar, oh Jew(s), the army of Muhammad will arrive) can regularly be heard.<sup>29</sup>

Another example of *ummatic* products include humorous t-shirts, scarves, and stickers that transform the logo of Manchester United to Muslimeen United (United Muslims), or Hard Rock Café reinterpreted as Hard Rock Imam. Such mimicry appropriatively imitates symbols of the Other as a subversive strategy, exploiting their powerful effect by transforming them into one's own identitarian counter-agenda (cf. Bhabha 1994: 86). In addition to enabling identifying oneself against the Other and thereby (re-)constitute collective identity through consumption, such products' humorous dimension further strengthens the bonds of those who share the insiders' laughter. Similarly, PAS-related 'Palestine solidarity products' (Müller 2010: 763–65) intensify both the emotional ties within the domestic in-group as well as the imagined community of an international Islamic *ummah* that, despite its de facto



*Figure 4.3* The PAS Phone, launched at the PAS General Assembly 2010 by PAS President Abdul Hadi Awang (right) and Secretary General Mustafa Ali (left)

Source: Kota Bharu, 20 May 2010. Photo by Dominik M. Müller.

inescapably localized nature and fragmentation, is emically viewed to essentially transcend the borders of nation states.

The marketization of PAS has also conquered PASTI (Pusat Asuhan Tunas Islam), a sub-organization founded and controlled by the PAS Youth which maintains a pre-school education network across all Malaysian states. Since 2010, PASTI's activities are no longer limited to early childhood education. At the PAS Youth General Assembly in 2010, a PASTI-based product line was ceremoniously presented, sold under the brand KOPASTI (Koperasi Pendidikan dan Kebajikan Anak Soleh Tunas Islam Malaysia Berhad). These KOPASTI products include tea (*Teh Uncang PASTI*), chocolate biscuits (*Biskit Coklat*), a malt-chocolate drink (*Minuman Malt Coklat*), and toothpaste (*Ubat Gigi Halal/Halal Toothpaste*, one for children and one for adults). The KOPASTI toothpaste contains *Kayu Sugi*, a wood which Prophet Muhammad supposedly used to clean his teeth. KOPASTI also sells pilgrimage travel packages, in cooperation with the PAS-friendly Malaysian travel company Multaqa Al Iman Travel, while prominent PAS Youth leaders sometimes serve as the 'trusting' faces on its advertising banners.<sup>30</sup> After its launch in 2010, the KOPASTI products were marketed all over the country by PAS Youth branches, apparently regarded as 'commodities of the struggle' which help to raise funds and at the same time enable morally unquestionable Islamic consumption.



Figure 4.4 A colorful advertising flyer for the PAS Youth-related products of PASTI/KOPASTI

Source: photo by Dominik M. Müller.



***PAS product promotion and Islamist celebrity advertising***

The sale and marketing of PAS-related products not only takes place at stalls on the perimeter of PAS events or next to PAS offices, but has also entered center stage. The KOPASTI product line was presented during the PAS Youth General Assembly 2010 by none other than the PAS Youth chief himself, mixing political, religious and commercial advertising. The smiling politician-cum-religious scholar stood on the stage, as several products were ceremonially handed to him, up to the point where he had numerous packages in his arms that he was almost unable to hold them. This was accompanied by a speech advertising each product to the General Assembly's audience, given by the political event's moderator. At the same event, which was held under the PAS Youth's dogmatist motto 'purify the struggle, bring about victory' (*Murnikan Perjuangan, Maknakan Perjuangan*), the PAS Youth chief also promoted other, non-KOPASTI-branded, products. Two perfumes, Caliph Mecca and Medina, that contained holy water (*zam zam*) instead of alcohol, were available for both genders, and sold at a promotional rate. The moderator advised the crowd that although the perfume did not contain alcohol, they should not drink it, a joke that led to cheering laughter among the audience and the PAS Youth delegates on stage. Later these perfumes were sold at the entrance of the venue, where the salesman insisted on spraying samples on interested by-passers' wrists in order to convince them of the quality of his product, just like a perfume seller at any store in the world would do. Next to his stall, PASTI's toothpaste was sold. There was also a promotion for newly published books written or edited by PAS Youth leaders such as Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi, Nik Mohamad Abduh and Riduan Mohamad Nor. These books were also advertised by the moderator, who jokingly imitated a market crier: 'Buy it! It will definitely be sold out!' (*Belilah! Pasti akan terjual!*). Attendees were able to buy a copy at the entrance of the Kelantan Trade Centre, where the event took place. Many participants left the place not only with the experience of an intense 14-hour long political ritual, but also with several newly purchased products in their bags.

PAS leaders also advertise other types of commercial products, including soft drinks, herbal medicines, chocolate, perfumes, coffee and tea. These products are often produced by companies which are led by PAS members or those close to the party. The eye-care brand Permata Hijrah is one such example. One of its products is a combination between eye drops and 'vibrating glasses'. One inserts a liquid into the eyes, puts on opaque glasses, and then switches on the vibration mode—a procedure that I tested at a PAS event (and saw advertised at two others). The product, officially called Permata Terapi (therapy jewel) and sold for RM 119.90 (25 Euro) is said to be useful 'against headache, tired eyes, and dim view', and claims that it 'improves blood circulation and is good for the nerves' (author's translation). The PAS Spiritual Leader Nik Aziz acted as its advertising face, serving as what in globalized marketing terminology might be called a 'trust-building celebrity' who attaches a particular meaning

to the brand, while targeting the consumers' 'brand perception'. At the PAS General Assembly in 2010, two large advertising banners depicted Nik Aziz giving a 'thumbs up' for Permata Hijrah, thereby signaling that this product is officially recommended by PAS. On the company's homepage (Permata Hijrah 2011), an image of Nik Aziz was also featured. This is obviously part of a marketing campaign to link PAS and Nik Aziz's value-adding aura to the brand in order to increase sales and profits, which in turn, will benefit the 'Islamic movement's' religious and political cause.

One product, the coffee Cafe Habbatus Sauda' Bermadu Al-Naim, that was sold at a PAS Youth event used no less a figure than Prophet Muhammad as the trust building channel to advertise its quality. It contains both honey and the 'Prophet-recommended' ingredient *Habbatus Sauda'*. A quote from the Holy Messenger was printed on its colorful wrapping: 'The Prophet, Peace be Upon Him, said according to a narrative from Imam Bukhari's collection of *hadith*: "... Habbatus Sauda cures any disease except death"''.<sup>31</sup> For further evidence, a *surah* from the Qur'an, *Surah An-Nahl*, was added: 'This honey (drink) comes from the stomach of bees in varying colors, inside there is a medicine that heals mankind from several diseases' (author's translation).

An alcohol-free *halal* beer (*bir halal*) was also offered at PAS events I attended during my fieldwork. One such 'beer' is sold by the Malaysian-Iranian Corporation under the ISTAK brand. It is produced in Iran, brewed from Bavarian malt and marketed by the Malaysia-based company across Southeast Asia. The PAS Youth Sarawak advertised it through an article on its official homepage (PAS Youth Sarawak 2009), under the eye-catching title *Mari Minum Bir* (come on, let's drink beer!). Here, PAS again serves as a trust-building channel, while commercial, religious and political advertising melt into each other.

PAS' iconic Spiritual Leader Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat is also at the heart of this pop-Islamist melting process. Besides appearing as a 'trust builder' in advertisements for PAS-related commercial brands, he is also commoditized himself. Nik Aziz enjoys an almost saint-like reputation and receives admiration even from some political 'foes' and non-Muslims. He is widely regarded as morally upright, incorruptible and is oft-praised for his 'very simple lifestyle', as he lives in a small house despite being chief minister of Kelantan (Hooker 2003: 30). I came across several types of PAS merchandise T-shirts, stickers, banners on cars and even wrist watches on which Nik Aziz was depicted in a Che Guevara-esque iconizing manner. A slogan on the watches added *Tok Guru Ambo*<sup>32</sup> (My *Tok Guru*), referring to his popular nick name *Tok Guru* in the Kelantanese vernacular. At the PAS General Assembly in 2010, postage stamps depicting his face were sold. These '*Tok Guru* stamps' (*setemp Tok Guru*) were marketed in commercial language as 'corporate stamps' (*setemp korporat*). Nearby, a PAS merchandise stall's banner greeted visitors: 'Welcome to the stall *Adik Sayang Tok Guru*' (*Selamat Datang Ke Gerai Adik Sayang Tok Guru*). On a green background there were several T-shirts with his portrait. The banner further explained in

entrepreneurial language: 'We offer promotion sales for PAS shirts' (*Kami menyediakan jualan promosi t-shirt PAS*). Below, the Economic Affairs Bureau of a PAS Youth branch in Perlis wished visitors a 'Happy General Assembly' (*Selamat Bermuktamar*).

Another form of much more expensive Nik Aziz products includes large portraits. According to press reports, Nik Aziz 'was the star of' a fundraising dinner in Shah Alam in August 2010, when 'three portraits of the PAS spiritual leader fetched a total of RM 11,500 (2,800 Euro) during an auction' (*The Malaysian Insider*, 8 August 2010). One portrait depicting him in prayer, entitled *Doa Syahdu* (beautiful prayer), was purchased for RM 6,000 (1,500 Euro) by a Malay housewife, while two others showing the *Tok Guru* smiling, entitled *Seceria Suria Pagi* (pure morning sun), were sold for RM 3,000 (750 Euro) per piece. Some of the money was given to the families of the PAS 'martyrs' (*syahid*) of the 'Memali massacre' in 1985 (see Chapter 2), while other portions were used for PAS' public relations efforts to 'create a better understanding of democracy', as the Kelantanese PAS politician Husam Musa rhetorically framed it.<sup>33</sup>

Although I never came across anybody who admitted such beliefs, and Nik Aziz would reject them, there are rumors about a conviction among certain sections that his images have magic powers. This idea was referred to in an article of *Malaysia Today* (06 July 2009), and to some extent resembles what Stengs (2005: 314–15) observes about the sacred aura of commodified depictions of King Chulalongkorn in Thailand, where 'high commodities' and 'singularized' mass-products such as portraits and statues (Stengs 2005: 310–13) are believed to have supernatural capacities. According to *Malaysia Today* (6 July 2009), the belief about the Nik Aziz pictures holds that:

(E)ven an image of him can sway voters. It is widely believed (in Kelantan) that a picture of the Tok Guru seeking divine intervention against Barisan Nasional during special prayers at Stadium Sultan Mohamad IV had cast a spell on non-resident Kelantanese returning to vote in the last general election.

I can neither confirm nor deny this report. However, anyone visiting Kelantan and talking with local residents about Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat will quickly find out how the aura of this senior PAS leader and chief minister (*menteri besar*) still electrifies considerable masses. For instance, Wan Musa\*, a PAS supporter, told me: 'Nik Aziz is so good! His goodness is as big as that of one million average people taken together' (conversation with Wan Musa\*, Kota Bharu, 18 February 2010). Magic or not, within the PAS community, his portraits inherit cult value.<sup>34</sup> This value resembles how his bodily presence affects people, as I witnessed several times during my fieldwork. When he entered the hall in Shah Alam during a PAS event, the speaker (a PAS Women's Wing delegate) immediately stopped her speech in reverence, while the entire audience shouted *takbir* an *Allahu Akbar*, with everybody's

attention focusing on him, and camera flashes illuminating the room. When the clearly shaken speaker on stage finally recovered her voice two minutes later, she still appeared nervous, her voice shaking for the rest of her speech, in contrast to her demeanor before Nik Aziz's arrival. Similar reactions took place wherever the spiritual leader showed up, for example, at a food stall on the perimeter of the General Assembly 2010 in Kota Bharu, where several enthusiastic fans took pictures of him eating noodles for breakfast. Nik Aziz usually reacts with indulgent patience and a smile, further adding to the effectualness of his exceptional aura and the power that it exerts. During my fieldwork, Nik Aziz products far outnumbered commodities depicting any other PAS leader, which reflects his uncontested position as the most meaningful PAS icon of the present time. The imbalance of products between the two PAS leaders Nik Aziz and PAS President Abdul Hadi Awang in the PAS merchandisescape mirrors the different extent of both leaders' popularity.

Different companies and people produce and market Nik Aziz-products. In 2009, a business dispute about the Nik Aziz-related *Tok Guru* brand took place between Nik Aziz's son Nik Mohamad Abduh, who was a PAS Youth AJK at that time and became its deputy chief in 2011, and the Saffron Integrated Marketing company. Nik Mohamad Abduh declared in a 'special announcement' distributed via his weblog that he and certain PAS-related Islamic schools were, due to conflict, disentangling themselves from Saffron Integrated Marketing, which had previously marketed *Tok Guru*-branded goods. Nik Mohamad Abduh had been their 'advisor' and 'patron', but then decided, with the friendly permission of *Tok Guru* Nik Aziz and Abdul Hadi Awang, to continue his 'pure efforts' (*usaha murni*) through other business channels (compare Abduh 2011). From that point on, Nik Mohamad Abduh's *Tok Guru* marketing was conducted by a new company called Tok Guru Nutraceuticals Marketing, which advertised its product line in 2010 as 'the real *Tok Guru* products' (*Produk Tok Guru Sebenar*). On its homepage ([www.tg4all.com](http://www.tg4all.com), an acronym for *Tok Guru for All*), the header *Produk Tok Guru Sebenar* was added by the slogan 'rather than just the name' (*Bukan Sekadar Nama*). This new 'authentic' *Tok Guru* marketing agent now distributes a wide range of Islamic products (produced by various companies and under various brands), including a *Tok Guru* Juice (*Jus TG*), the earlier mentioned perfumes Caliph Mecca and Medina, an Islamic medical (*Syif'a*) drink (produced, according to Islamic sources to cure 'physical, spiritual, mental and emotional problems'), among others. The back cover of the PAS Youth Annual Report Book (*Buku Laporan Dewan Pemuda PAS 2009/2010*), which was distributed at the General Assembly in 2010, carried a full-page advertisement for Nik Mohamad Abduh's new company.

Overall, it seems that Nik Mohamad Abduh, an Al-Azhar trained young *ulama* with a degree in Syariah Law and additional study experience in India, successfully combines his commercial and political activities for the sake of the party. As this case illustrates, being a modern Islamic entrepreneur, marketing professional, young ultra-conservative *ulama* and political leader within the

PAS Youth is by no means mutually exclusive. As can be read in his various publications (e.g. Abduh 2008a, 2008b, 2009, 2010, 2011) in no uncertain terms, Nik Mohamad Abduh is at the forefront of those PAS Youth leaders who strongly insist on a classical Islamist political agenda, urgently oriented toward an Islamic State and 'complete' implementation of Islamic Law including *hudud* and *qisas*, to serve God's supposed will. In one exemplary writing, Nik Mohamad Abduh (2010) presents some of his normative outlook, lauding martyrdom (*mati syahid*) and holy war (*jihad suci*) in Afghanistan (Abduh 2010: 71), announcing hellfire to the UMNO politicians Mahathir Mohamad and Abdullah Badawi (Abduh 2010: 67) and praying for the 'destruction' of 'God's enemies' (*hancurkan musuh-musuhmu*, *ibid.*: 72) in the context of his brother Nik Adli's arrest as a 'terrorist' under the ISA. He also states that, as a pious Muslim, he had prayed for the death of Nik Adli (*ibid.*: 71) while the latter fought the 'infidel' Russians (*kuasa Rusia yang kufur*) in Afghanistan during Pakistani semester break. He further repeatedly made clear that 'the Jews' (*Yahudi*) were responsible for the suffering of the *ummah*. Notably, his secular and liberalist coalition partners in Pakatan Rakyat have, according to my knowledge, never made public comments on his writings. Similarly, it appears that the wider public beyond the PAS community has rarely taken notice of the contents of his publications. Among the PAS Youth, on the other hand, his books are bestsellers. This popularity is also reflected in the fact that he received the second-most votes in the Youth Wing internal election for AJK positions in 2009 and was elected as its deputy president with an overwhelming majority in 2011. The 'second wave Islamist' turn toward Islamic marketization and pious consumption have by no means replaced Nik Mohamad Abduh's and his young supporters' classical Islamist religio-political convictions, nor did their involvement in the PR-coalition transform them into 'post-Islamist pluralists', or 'moderate' their views about the divine 'duty' (*kewajipan*) to implement an entirely 'God-made' legal order for state and society as soon as possible.

### **'Dakwah is like marketing!' Rebranding the Islamic struggle**

One youth organization that operates under the PAS Women's Wing (Dewan Muslimat PAS) is NISA', a group that, as the PAS Youth's membership is limited to male youth only, is structurally not part of the PAS Youth. In modern marketing style, NISA' currently advertises itself to the public with the synonymous slogans *NISA'—Connecting Youth and Pengubung Generasi Muda*.

Despite the fact that its members do not belong to the PAS Youth, initially NISA' operated under the PAS Youth's Unit Amal, from its foundation in 1992 until 2005, when it became independent of Unit Amal and went through a process of what was explained to me as 'rebranding'. 'Rebranding' is notably an emic term that was used by NISA' members in our group discussion. Through this 'rebranding', NISA's appearance was substantially rearranged in line with globalized marketing practices. As I was told, the 'brand color'

purple was chosen for NISA's new corporate identity strategy. When I asked why this 'rebranding' took place, two NISA' members stated:

AMIRAH\*: We looked so stiff as Unit Amal NISA'. It's hard to attract young girls when we are representing ourselves as somebody like Unit Amal.

DOMINIK MÜLLER: You mean a bit too militaristic?

NURUL\*: I suppose you know about Unit Amal already. ... And it's hard to attract young girls to join us when we are representing ourselves as Unit Amal, so that's why we did the rebranding. We restructured, we redid all the roles.

(Group discussion with leading NISA' members, Kuala Lumpur, 15 January 2010)

The process of 'rebranding' was explained to me by Nurul\* later as being 'like (a) commercial-brand strategy'. Amirah\* added, 'we study about brands, the power of brands', although she herself came from a medical faculty. As she told me, one of her colleagues had studied a marketing-related program in the United States, and they were eager to implement such knowledge into NISA's work.

To further illustrate their consciously business-inspired strategies, the NISA' members referred to one of their welfare activities, NISA' Small Kindness or NSK, a program under which several fundraising and aid activities were conducted. With the purpose of advertising the 'brand' NISA' Small Kindness (NSK), colorful brochures were distributed, and for instance, distributed to grocery stores, so that the salespersons would give them away to their customers. Money that was raised through this 'branded' program was given to 'needy people' as part of NISA's welfare mission. Other activities under NSK included sports and games. The 'brands' NSK and NISA' are intended to have an effect like powerful commercial brands—'business to *dakwah*', as a NISA' member called it.

The following segment of my group discussion with leading NISA members in 2010 exemplifies how they have integrated marketing terminologies and strategies into their organizational and rhetoric culture:

AMIRAH\*: It's like when you see Mercedes Benz, we can (say) 'oh gosh!', something like that (laughs). ...

NURUL\*: ... before that (we did a lot of *dakwah* as well), but the society didn't notice. Just to make them notice us, we rebranded and we changed our approach, to, what we call it ...

AMIRAH\*: Creating the way! ... (laughs)

NURUL\*: Business to *dakwah*! Do you remember the Blue-Ocean Strategy? Blue-Ocean Strategy,<sup>35</sup> that is management.

AMIRAH\*: The marketing strategy.

(Group discussion with leading NISA' members, Kuala Lumpur, 15 January 2010)

The analogy between the call for *dakwah* and business terminology seems to be at the heart of NISA's communication strategies since 2005. Amirah\* stated that 'we see *dakwah* as marketing':

NURUL\*: We have very good product, Islam is a very good product, but our marketing agent is quite stiff.

MARYAM\*: Unacceptable. (laughs)

NURUL\*: So we want them (the *dakwah*/marketing approaches) to be as good as the product. The product is good, Islam is good for everybody. But somehow the marketing agent ... (laughs) So we want to change the marketing strategy because for us *dakwah* is like marketing. ... we have to know the marketing strategy. The product is there. The product is from God. The product is not from us, just the strategies.

(Group discussion with leading NISA' members, Kuala Lumpur, 15 January 2010)

As illustrated here, modern terminologies of commercial marketing, branding and entrepreneurial categories of 'products' and 'sales' have been transformatively appropriated into the Islamist missionary context of PAS and NISA', with the young generation of academically educated elites playing a crucial role in the process. This innovation in wording and thinking has to do with the educational backgrounds of the NISA' Central Committee members, all of whom study or had studied at universities in Malaysia or abroad. At the same time, it is also related to more general trends in urban and semi-urban Malaysia, particularly among the new Malay middle class, which typically has a strong passion for business language.

As a leading NISA' member told me, NISA' had chosen purple (*ungu*) as its 'brand color'. When young female members of PAS are active in what they categorize to be 'political' (*politik*) matters as the Women Wing's Youth Section (PAS Muslimat Muda), they will wear green headscarves, but when they are active in NISA's programs, they wear a purple headscarf. In its emic view, NISA' does not do 'political' work (*politik*), but only missionary work (*dakwah*)—*dakwah* and *politik* are separate spheres of practice in PAS' emic discourse. To ensure success, NISA' attempts not to be immediately recognized as members of PAS by its *dakwah* targets.<sup>36</sup> Thus, when going 'undercover' on supposedly 'apolitical' *dakwah*, purple is the color of choice (= NISA'), while the same person will wear green when she is 'politically' active and wants to be openly visible as a PAS member (= Muslimat Muda).<sup>37</sup>

In line with its purple brand strategy, NISA' organized a big concert and 'Islamic entertainment' event, *Karnival Aura Ungu* (Purple Aura Carnival) in 2010.<sup>38</sup> The event's official goal included introducing NISA' 'as a *dakwah* movement' to the public and offering an 'alternative form of entertainment', especially for women. Similar to what marketing consultants would recommend, a 'famous celebrity' (*selebriti terkenal*) had been invited, the earlier mentioned singer Aishah with her Islamic song *Syurga di bawah telapak kaki Ibu* (heaven

under the sole of mother's foot), and commercial sponsors were brought on board, including Green Tea Colustrum (GTC) and the Islamic music webpage *Nasyeed.com*.

The marketization of NISA' clearly indicates significant processes of organizational cultural transformation pioneered by the youth—which, as we saw in this section, is by no means limited to the (male) 'Youth Wing' of PAS (Dewan Pemuda PAS). Furthermore, the market has become a new paradigm for the young Islamist generation's strategic thinking, along with a shift to the vocabulary of entrepreneurialism.

The same trend becomes obvious in the case of the PAS' Youth's Unit Amal. Unit Amal, which also goes by the name Jabatan Amal, is a volunteer welfare and security group that operates under the PAS Youth. Their fashionably dressed members are present at most PAS events across the country. The Unit is also active in disaster aid and community work. Unit Amal was officially 'rebranded' in 2004, as the Unit's chief, Juhari Osman, explicitly told me when he narrated Unit Amal's history since its foundation in 1991 (interview with Juhari Osman, Melaka, 27 January 2010). Previously, their uniforms were designed in a boy scout-like brown/dark green tone. Unit Amal's leadership had been unhappy with their group's appearance and arranged an overall 'rebranding'. Since then, a more vivid colorful combination of dark red and black and white brightens Unit Amal's new corporate dress, and a new type of hat, sometimes supplemented by white gloves, adds to its visual appearance. When asked why this 'rebranding' took place and why this particular new color-combination was chosen, Juhari Osman told me that the aim was to create a 'new image' (*image baru*), that the new dress looked 'smarter' (*lebih smart*), and that the change had been necessary in the wake of a 'new generation' (*generasi baru*). He stressed, however, that all such changes were 'only technical' (*tapi hanya teknikal berubah*), implying that they had nothing to do with transforming the ideological 'core principles' of the 'Islamic movement' (a point that many PAS members stressed when talking about the youth pioneering changes within PAS). Similar to the case of NISA', organizational changes were explained within the rhetoric framework of a modern marketing terminology, something that would have rarely been imaginable in PAS 30 years ago. Inspired by the changes, even some senior *ulama* are nowadays active businessmen and frame decidedly Islamist politics at least occasionally in marketized language. The PAS Ulama chief, Harun Taib (quoted in *Malaysiakini*, 15 November 2012), for example, argued in 2012 that an implementation of *hudud* would, besides reducing crime to a minimum and pleasing God's will, also create new jobs and therefore strengthen Malaysia's economy.

Obviously, significant changes have occurred, with their inspirations coming not only from the Islamic theology or Malay tradition, but also from originally capitalist sources that are globally popular across ideological boundaries within the framework of present-day multiple modernities. On the other hand, a marketized PAS and its commodified Islam are not merely



responses to transnational trends; they must also be understood in their relational dimension vis-à-vis the Islamic Party's local environment, most notably the to some extent UMNO-sponsored rise of *halal* markets in Malaysia, and UMNO's own efforts of party-specific political marketing. Quite obviously, the new business-style rhetoric and merchandization of PAS are also a clear and strategic response to UMNO and UMNO-style politicking. In addition to its policies of 'Islamic' economic development, for decades, UMNO has produced t-shirts, bags, buttons, and, for instance, dressed its Women Wing's (Wanita UMNO) division in matching outfits. This style is now omnipresent in Malaysian politics. While sporting PAS-logo items symbolically distinguishes wearers from UMNO members and strengthens their social in-group relations, the appearance of PAS products themselves is to some extent also a response to and commentary on UMNO's 'corporate' brand. Therefore, it can be argued that one variant of the PAS/UMNO Islamization race is an Islamic marketization race between both parties. In this relational dynamic, PAS attempts to stage a difference from UMNO-style commercial activities, which are themselves presented by UMNO as serving Islamic purposes. Apparently, in order to counter UMNO's strategy of portraying itself as a champion of modern Islamic economic development, PAS seeks to authenticate itself as the real champion of Islamic marketization.

The marketization of PAS is furthermore interconnected with significant changes in self-conceptualizations within the party. As the young generation of PAS activists, and some elders alike, increasingly frame the party's activities in business terminology, the PAS Youth becomes seen as a 'factory' (*kilang*, see Ayub 2009: 53) to produce 'human resources' and assure 'professional training' for 'future leaders'. Strategic political changes are commercially labeled as 'rebranding', and the approaches for political communication or *dakwah* are partly tailored in line with marketing theories derived from glocalized capitalism. The PAS Youth enthusiastically involves itself in commercial activities, the party's struggle is commodified, and PAS leaders engage in Islamic celebrity advertising for PAS-related companies. Such modern entrepreneurial practices and thinking stand, emically perceived, in no contradiction to PAS' normative rejection of 'man-made' principles like capitalism, the intrusion of 'Western culture', or its proclaimed defense of Islamic purity vis-à-vis the 'hypocrite' Islamic commercial activities of UMNO. Within the PAS community and especially among its younger members, capitalist-inspired marketization and consumption are considered permissible, as long as they are perceived to have gone through an 'authentic' (= PAS-approved) Islamic filter, so that they can be re-interpreted as 'essentially' Islamic or serving 'Islamic purposes'. 'Western' consumption behavior, materialism and capitalism are still mostly condemned on the level of normative talk. However, what young PAS activists as consumers and entrepreneurs practice, in their view, is different, Islamic, and therefore unquestionably good and desirable. The PAS Youth claims to reject Western influences in their attempts to 'purify the struggle'. However, some of the instrumental approaches to supposedly do so are taken from the—as such imagined—'impure' modern world (or

*jahiliyah moden/modern jahiliyah*), but ‘Islamically’ transformed to become ‘tools of purification’. For most PAS members, innovations that ‘deviate’ from the role model of the Islamic origins are permissible if they are considered to be useful to promote ‘core principles’ of the ‘pure Islamic struggle’ under contemporary conditions. This shows how actors manage to harmonize what a distant observer may interpret as unbridgeable contradictions, and that the pop-Islamist simultaneity of the PAS Youth’s marketization and its enthusiastic insistence on classical Islamist political goals run counter to the common arguments about the post-Islamist turn or the second wave of Islamism.

The semi-commercial, semi-religio-political marketization has even made it to the very ritualistic center of its major events, with PAS Youth Chief Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi acting as a testimonial for commercial products at a PAS General Assembly, while Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat and even Prophet Muhammad serve as commercial trust-building channels to advertise brands and goods. This, as well as the several ‘rebranding’ and corporate identity strategies that have been described, mirror the ways that many modern political parties operate under the conditions of contemporary marketed discursive public spheres, with the Islamist party PAS being no exception to such trends—except the transformative aspect of its ‘Islamic’ appropriation.

Notwithstanding its earlier-described very specific locally conditioned context, such reference to marketing and business concepts seems to build one modern universal that can be found in various transformatively appropriated local forms and has conquered much of the globe, even across ideologically and culturally highly contrastive communities—regardless of if the responsible communication strategists work at an advertising company in New York City or in the media department of an Islamist ‘anti-capitalist’ party in Kuala Lumpur. This can be read against the backdrop of ongoing processes of ‘multiple modernities’ (Eisenstadt 2006; Schwinn 2006), wherein different paths, sometimes interpreted as ‘alternative modernities’ (Gaonkar 1999), are still part of the same process. This tendency goes hand-in-hand with the consumptionist and lifestyle turn in the transnational second wave of Islamism since the 1990s, although in the case of the PAS Youth, in contrast to dominant scholarly assumptions, there is as yet no indication that this shift causes a turn away from the classical Islamist obsession with Islamic state organization. In contrast, the very same persons who passionately seek to bring *hudud* and a however-labeled ‘complete Islamic rule’ back to the center of PAS’ immediate political priorities, like the PAS Youth deputy chief and businessman Nik Mohamad Abduh and the PAS Youth chief and ‘commercial testimonial’ Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi, are involved at the forefront of the pop-Islamist marketization process. Young grassroots members, on the other hand, widely support these leaders and can be observed placing commercially mass-produced ‘We Support Hudud’ (*Kami Menyokong Hudud*) stickers next to their computers, buying pro-*hudud* t-shirts or clothes that call for the destruction of the ‘God-damned Jews’ (*Yahudi Laknatullah*) in religious terms (see Müller 2010: 778), or practicing other forms of modern PAS-style pop-Islamism.

On the micro level, the symbolic consumption of all of these types of PAS-related products serves to express and reinforce the consumers' emotional and identitarian bonds to the party. At the same time, such consumption has a social function in the politics of self-expression within one's peer group, allowing one to stage both conformity and some degree of 'characteristic' individuality due to the PAS-products' stratified diversity. The sale and visible consumption of these products strengthens the mutual bonds of PAS' organizational or corporate identity—for the political organization as a whole, as well as for each single consumer. This commercially structured but political-partisan consumerism, in which collective inward ideas are outwardly expressed, binds members of the in-group together through ideological goods and material culture. In the commodification of PAS' 'Islamic struggle', modern forms of clothing, consumption and new media serve as vital sites for the practical realization of community. Of course these instances remain related to the similarly crucial community-creating aspects of pious religiosity, political motivation and missionary ideology.

The PAS Youth, and the female young NISA activists, are currently deeply obsessed with pushing forward the pop-cultural modernization of PAS and its *dakwah*. Nevertheless, this has not led to a post-Islamist turn among the discourse-dominating forces of the party's young generation or their grassroots support base. Conversely, even the PAS Youth's most hardline dogmatists in terms of Islamist state organization are key players in the marketization of PAS and its turn toward pop-Islamism. They serve as commercial advertising faces, promote products, run their own companies or proudly share their religio-political stage with rock singers. While many PAS Youth grassroots members are passionate consumers of marketized Islam, most remain deeply committed to a decidedly Islamist political ideology and the urgent practical implementation of Islamist core goals. Their professionally marketized, pop-culturally communicated but at the same time firmly Islamist positions are most prominently represented by PAS Youth leaders such as Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi, Nik Mohamad Abduh, Azman Shapawi, Kamaruzaman Mohamad, Riduan Mohamad Nor, Syed Abdul Kadir Al-Joofre and numerous other presently discourse-dominating PAS Youth 'neo-conservatives', who sharply oppose any post-Islamist distancing of their anti-pragmatist path of *Syariah*-based 'purification'.

## Notes

- 1 For an excellent historical analysis of the PAS Youth's role as a vehicle for social movement mobilization, see Liow (2011).
- 2 The PAS Youth Chief Tantawi, for his part, regularly makes clear that 'we do not conduct this struggle for the sake of democracy or even because of faith/belief in democracy, but we engage in this holy struggle because we want to empower the *Syariah* and all of its elements' (Tantawi 2013a, author's translation).
- 3 The previous PAS Youth leader Ustaz Abu Bakar Chik (tenure 1989–99) reportedly said to Prof. Dr Abdul Aziz, a renowned legal expert and BN-critical intellectual

who had presented another critical study there: 'I don't even want to look at your face, I didn't want to come, but I came anyway. ... If you want to, you should go into politics.'

- 4 It must be added that the ARC already existed in the months before the earlier-mentioned PAS event in Gombak in November 2009, where the failure to attract the young generation was diagnosed by invited local academics. The ARC was thus a highly suitable candidate to be strengthened in order to counter the image that PAS is not sufficiently accessible for the young generation.
- 5 One example is the 2009-produced bestselling movie *Bohsia: Jangan Pilih Jalan Hitam* (Prostitute: Don't Choose the Black Path/Road).
- 6 These events were held in August 2009 in Pulau Pinang (one week long) and in Negeri Sembilan in October 2009.
- 7 Despite such harsh legal restrictions, the newspaper *Harakah* is widely available across Malaysia.
- 8 In fact, the UMNO Women's Wing's youth section, for example, openly declared having created a special unit to conduct 'cyber warfare' on the opposition. See *Bernama*, 6 July 2012.
- 9 Boorstin (1961) introduced the concept of a 'pseudo event' in the context of American politics, with 'pseudo events' like press conferences or presidential debates fulfilling the definition of events that take place only in order to be reported about by mass media.
- 10 The PAS Youth's secretary general at that time, Kamaruzaman Mohamad, argued at first that the rapper Pitbull brought immoral cultural norms into the country, supplementing that argument with a second one: 'bad enough that he is named after a dog' (Kamaruzaman Mohamad, quoted in *The Malaysian Insider*, 14 May 2010).
- 11 Aggressive condemnations of homosexuality are common in contemporary PAS Youth discourse, and not one PAS Youth member has yet openly disagreed with this, as it could be expected from a 'post-Islamist' generation. In a peculiar attempt to argue within a universally acceptable framework, the PAS Youth's office for human rights' leader Ahmad Zamri declared that homosexuality was a violation of Article 16 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which speaks about the fundamental right of an individual to come into a marriage as a man and a woman (*Malaysiakini*, 5 November 2011). He confused a right with a duty, and blended out the various parts of the UDHR which substantiate the right for sexual self-determination. The PAS Youth's deputy chief, Nik Mohamad Abduh (2011, no page), sharply condemned 'gay culture' in the context of an Elton John concert. He thereby compared the famous *ulama*, Dr Mohd Asri Zainul Abidin, to a woman, after the latter defended the idea to allow the concert for non-Muslims only.
- 12 On the genre and its hybrid localized pop evolution since the 1980s, see Barendregt (2006, 2008a, 2011) and Beng (2007).
- 13 The *Wali Songo* are nine, especially in Indonesia, sheer saint-like venerated mythical persons, who are said to have spread Islam in the archipelago of what in the post-colonial era has become known as Malaysia and Indonesia.
- 14 For a video report about this celebration screened by PAS' online television, see YouTube (2009b).
- 15 For pictures of Nik Aziz welcoming the rock singers Amy Search and Renggo, see, for example, Warna-Warna Koleksi (2009); for a series of pictures of Nik Aziz sitting together and having a discussion with Amy Search dressed in Islamic attire and later praying together, see Ar-Rifke Weblog (2010).
- 16 For a video report of Nik Aziz's attendance, see YouTube (2008). Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat's son and PAS Youth key leader, Nik Mohamad Abduh (2008b), also describes a visit to Amy Search's house for *Hari Raya* using enthusiastic words.

- 17 During my fieldwork, Khairul Faizi Ahmad Kamil was the PAS Youth chief of the state Johor and a national Central Committee member. Since 2011, he serves as the secretary general of the national PAS Youth.
- 18 A female pro-PAS Facebook commentator criticized that instead of just setting up photo opportunities, one should engage with these young people in a more in-depth and sustainable manner. Nevertheless, the vast majority of PAS Youth Facebook followers' comments on these pictures were highly enthusiastic.
- 19 For a video of the whole interview, see YouTube (2011c).
- 20 The video was posted in June 2011 on a non-public profile on Facebook, thus no publicly accessible URL can be provided here.
- 21 Sources within PAS gave different accounts of the singer's reasons for joining UMNO: Umar\*, a PAS Youth activist close to its leadership argued that according to his knowledge, Amy had joined UMNO because of financial problems (informal conversation with Umar\*, 20 December 2012). Another PAS member, Yaakob Ismail\*, however, indicated that the singer may have become unsatisfied with PAS' political course (informal conversations with Yaakob Ismail\*, Kuala Lumpur, 21 December 2012). In any case, both sources confirmed my observation that PAS and UMNO were heavily competing over the support of popular singers in 2012.
- 22 Among several social scientists, the premise that modernity results in secularization has been dismissed at least since the 1990s. Scholars like Blank (2001), Utvik (2006) and Starrett (1995) established that there is no reason to assume that Islamists decry modern Islamic consumption and production. However, among other academics, the modernization–secularization hypothesis and the idea of Islamism being essentially un- and anti-modern prevails (see, for example, Mazarr 2007).
- 23 Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi apparently derived the term 'modern *jahiliyah*' from the Muslim Brotherhood's icon Sayyid Qutb (1906–66), who often serves as a role model for PAS' ideological discourses and had used the same term to formulate an Islamic critique of Western modernity (see Zaman 2002: 8).
- 24 The other alleged anti-Islamic forces that pursued 'evil plans' (*rancangan jahat*) comprised the communist movement (Gerakan Komunis), Jewish and Freemason movements (Gerakan Yahudi dan Freemason), the 'movement of Muslim hypocrites' (Gerakan Munafiqin), and so-called Solibiyah movements which include, among others, orientalis (Orientalis), non-Muslim missionaries (*Missionerry* [sic]), and the 'women's liberation movement' (*gerakan 'Women Liberation'*) (Tantawi 2010b, no page).
- 25 The concept of 'glocalization' was coined by the sociologist Roland Robertson (1992, 1994, 1995). As Giulianotti and Robertson (2007: 134) point out, the term

'glocalization derives from the Japanese term *dochakuka*, meaning "global localization" or, in micro-marketing terms, the tailoring of global products and services to suit particular cultural tastes ... Sociological usage of glocalization highlights the simultaneity or co-presence of both universalizing and particularizing tendencies in globalization; that is, the commonly interconnected processes of homogenization and heterogenization.'

- 26 In terms of such 'Islamic' mobile media, Hoffstaedter (2011: 178) speaks of the 'potent ... internalised Islamicity that may be expressed in someone's ringtone chiming the call to prayer'.
- 27 The *Ilkone i800* was the first of such phones. See Barendregt (2008b: 161).
- 28 This paragraph is taken from Müller (2010), Copyright © 2010 SOAS. Reproduced by permission of IP Publishing Ltd.
- 29 The same phrase is used by Islamist groups in other countries. Amrozi, one of the Bali bombers of Jemaah Islamiyah (JI)—whose brand of Islamism is very different from

the non-violent PAS form—shouted it in the courtroom on the day he was sentenced to death. The Lebanese Hezbollah named a certain type of rocket *Khaibar-1*.

- 30 For instance, the three PAS Youth leaders Nasrudin Tantawi, Nik Abduh and Azman Shapawi were depicted on an advertising banner of Al Quds Travel (2011), which offered pilgrimage travel packages in cooperation with the PAS Youth.
- 31 Author's translation. Apparently this is quoted from a *hadith* narrated by Abu Hureah. The Malay term *Habbatus Sauda* thereby seems to refer to a natural product known as 'black granules', 'black seed' or *kalonji*, which is made from *Nigella Sativa*.
- 32 *Ambo* is the Kelantanese vernacular term for the Standard Malay word *saya* (I/my/me). *Tok Guru* means 'respected teacher', usually referring to Islamic teachers from a traditional Malay *pondok*, and is the term usually used within the PAS community to informally refer to Nik Aziz. In a more formal version, he (and PAS President Abdul Hadi Awang) is also called *Tuan Guru*.
- 33 The event was attended by more than 1,000 people. Families of Malaysians who died more recently at the hands of the police had been invited and were given bouquets of flowers, among them the mother of Aminulrashid Amzah, a 14-year-old boy who was shot by the Malaysian police under disputed circumstances in April 2010.
- 34 Stengs (2005: 306) derives the term 'cult value' from Walter Benjamin's notion of the '*Kultwert eines Bildes*'. However, she argues that despite being (mass-)commoditized, certain leader portraits can paradoxically 'be mass products and sacred at the same time' (Stengs 2005: 303).
- 35 The Blue Ocean Strategy is a business approach developed by Kim and Mauborgne (2005), which aims to provide a theoretical framework for the creation of uncontested market space.
- 36 In an attempt to hide the fact that it belongs to PAS, NISA' often presents itself as an 'NGO' to the public. This was also supported by PAS' newspaper, *Harakah*, in an article where it described NISA' as '*sebuah badan bukan kerajaan*' (a non-governmental organization) (see *Harakah Daily*, 9 May 2010).
- 37 NISA's *dakwah* also includes a radio show on the popular local Islamic radio station IKIMfm.
- 38 The event took place in Shah Alam at the Kompleks Belia dan Kebudayaan from 21 to 22 May 2010.

# Conclusion

In contrast to the assumption that Islamic marketization and the 'post-Islamist turn' are part of the same process, in which a focus on individual Islamic lifestyle and modern consumption patterns replace the state-political orientation of 'classical Islamism', the case of the contemporary PAS Youth does not exhibit sufficient evidence to uphold this argument. The PAS Youth has instead appropriated and integrated the spectacular rise of modern Islamic consumer culture since the 1990s, and subordinated it to its 'classical Islamist' political targets, such as an Islamic State 'completely' organized and governed under a 'God-made' normative order. Marketization and the young generation's enthusiasm for Islamic consumption are used as a strategy to realize these targets. The discourse-dominating voices in the current PAS Youth thereby decidedly oppose the trend toward 'moderation' among some parts of the comparably less marketized senior party. Political observers' hopes, influenced by their normative bias for post-Islamist 'moderation', that due to a consumptionist shift, university education, new media usage and Islamic market liberalization, political Islamism will finally disappear, cannot be upheld in the context of the present PAS Youth. One crucial reason seems to be that the ongoing pervasive tendency toward social, political and legal Islamization in Malaysia since the 1980s, as well as the locally specific process of 'out-Islamization' between PAS, UMNO and various Islamist civil society actors, provide no conducive framework for post-Islamism. This also becomes obvious in the massive institutionalization and state-based bureaucratization of Islam in Malaysia in recent years, that was, for the most part, not even introduced by the 'Islamist' party PAS, but by its allegedly 'moderate Islamic' nemesis, UMNO. The youth, which in modern societies tends to serve as an agent of social and political change in a process of generational contestation and subsequent social renewal, is a clear indicator of the absence of a post-Islamist turn of PAS.

Unlike other Islamic political parties elsewhere in the world, the PAS Youth's discourse-dominating elites remain thoroughly (neo-)conservative in terms of the legalist outlook of classical Islamism, and stick to the Islamist conviction that for any political question, 'Islam is the solution'. The PAS Youth leaders' categorical rejection of compromise on such ideologically

purist convictions stands—to some extent—in party-internal opposition to the post-2004 tendency of strategic moderation by the senior PAS. Even influential senior reformists (sometimes labeled by party-outsiders as Erdogans) still uphold the legalist targets of classical Islamism in ideal-theory, as normative long-term goals based on supposedly divine will vis-à-vis how life on earth should be. In certain aspects, the PAS Youth appears progressive, but a closer examination leaves little doubt that they will continue to work against any alternative post-Islamist project, due to their firm dogmatism when it comes to the core elements of Islamism as a political ideology. Beyond a strong obsession with the afterlife ('there is no life except the afterlife', see Abduh [2011]), hatred for religiously defined enemies ('damned gay culture'; see Abduh [2011]; 'destroy the God-damned Jews!'<sup>1</sup> 'the West wants to destroy Islam', see Tantawi [2010b]<sup>2</sup>), and calls for strict media censorship ('set up a Syariah censorship board for films!'<sup>3</sup>), this stance implies the conviction that it is a duty to implement *syariat Islam* at the state level, including its most controversial elements *hudud* and *qisas*, as soon as this is possible by democratic means.

Throughout the history of the Islamic Party of Malaysia (PAS), the PAS Youth has repeatedly served as a crucial agent of organizational and political change, due to its young idealistic, innovative and potentially transgressive orientation, and the respective political circumstances, both domestic and beyond Malaysia. Presently, the PAS Youth's drive for party-internal change is two-directional. First, the discourse-dominant PAS Youth elites want to serve as an orthodox 'corrective'. They are thereby much more 'ideologically radical'—in the sense of uncompromising—in terms of upholding political Islamist 'core' principles than certain influential sections of the more pragmatic senior PAS leadership. Second, the PAS Youth is presently, notwithstanding its purist insistence on Islamist legalism, a leading force when it comes to the gradual *softening* of the party's approach to certain parts of popular culture. It tries hard to develop a more inclusivist profile for the party and support a more 'contemporary' and attractive brand of popular Islamism.

The current PAS Youth is, without contradiction, a newly emerging political agent of change that wants to readjust the parameters of the party's political engagement in certain aspects, and a reactionary force of neo-Islamist conservatism at the same time. Despite all proclaimed anti-pragmatism and its aspiration to 'purify the struggle' (*murnikan perjuangan*), the PAS Youth is in many aspects a very modern organization, and is at the forefront of the Islamic Party's pop-Islamist modernization. This becomes obvious in the professionalization of *dakwah*, the use of new media, the appropriation of globalized public relations strategies, and the massive commercialist—and interrelated mental and rhetoric—marketization of its 'Islamic struggle' (*perjuangan Islam*). While the PAS Youth remains obsessed with a state-oriented political Islamist agenda, at the same time the 'cultural turn' of the transnational 'second wave of Islamism' has a tremendous impact. An individualization of modern Islamic piety and a more consumptionist orientation are also widely



present in the PAS Youth community, but they provide space for new forms of expressing classical Islamist political convictions and collectivist *ummatic* identity. If the post-Islamist turn is characterized by the absence of renewed calls for an Islamic State among the media-savvy, university-educated Muslim youth (Boubekeur and Roy 2012: 13), the young generation's pop-Islamist reinvention of PAS contradicts its definition: In the PAS Youth community, such renewed calls and other constitutive elements of Islamist ideologies are constantly disseminated via Facebook, celebrity personalities, commercial activities and even rock music—precisely those channels that are claimed to be intrinsically linked with post-Islamism. Constitutive elements of the traditional Western-centric paradigm of modernity, such as secularization and the functional differentiation of societal spheres (religion, politics, law, economy, art, ethics, etc.) are certainly not part of the PAS Youth's case-specific realization of an alternative Islamic modernity. According to the discourse-dominant view within the PAS Youth during the research period, any attempts to differentiate these fields from the one all-encompassing normative ideal-order of Islam are incompatible with God's teachings, and should be understood as secularist attempts to 'destroy Islam' (*menghancurkan Islam*).<sup>4</sup>

The assumption that participation in democratic and parliamentary processes will lead to a post-Islamist ideological moderation of Islamist political organizations cannot be convincingly applied to the more complex case of PAS, let alone the PAS Youth. First, the party's historic peak of ideological radicalization in the 1980s took place after three decades of participation in the democratic and parliamentary process, when, partly inspired by transnational factors, a new political generation of PAS Young Turks rejected inclusion in a government coalition and shifted the party's course toward classical 'first wave' Islamism. Second, although a contested tendency toward pragmatic compromise has taken root among influential sections of the senior party, this is not a post-Islamist abandonment of earlier Islamist political *convictions* about divine state organization, but is rather a change in *strategies* and *immediate political priorities*. The dogmatists in PAS disagree with this tendency and enjoy an overwhelming support among the PAS Youth, especially from its numerous key leaders with Middle Eastern educational backgrounds, many of whom were graduates in Syariah Law and Islamic Studies from Al-Azhar University and members of PMRAM during their studies in Egypt. Third, the current PAS Youth participates in and expresses its commitment to parliamentary democracy, but nevertheless, its elites collectively uphold the passionate position of state-oriented political Islamism, 60 years after the Islamic Party's 'march through the institutions', while not one higher-ranking PAS Youth member ideologically supports a post-Islamist stance, as defined by Bayat (1996, 2005, 2007), Boubekeur and Roy (2012), Schiffauer (2010) and Amin (2010). Instead, the PAS Youth elites call for a renewed 'purification of the struggle', fiercely oppose Muslim pluralism and liberalism as 'heretic'<sup>5</sup> and unconditionally support the top-down knowledge transmission of PAS' Ulama Leadership doctrine.

On the other hand, the fact that the current Youth Wing elites are much more uncompromising and impatient in their insistence on Islamist state organization than many senior PAS politicians does not mean that the party itself is more ‘radical’ or will necessarily become more uncompromising in the future. The party’s history has shown that once the idealistic youth of the 1970s and 1980s have grown older and gathered more experience, some—but not all—of them became strategically more pragmatic in their political behavior. This, however, must not be confused with changes in their religious convictions about the general obligation to ‘fully’ implement ‘God-made’ laws on all levels of state and society, if possible. Furthermore, despite their unhappiness with too much compromise and patience, the PAS Youth elites remain committed to the strict party-internal norms pertaining to Islamic loyalty and disciplined public behavior (*wala’*, *taat*, *thiqah*, *adab al-Ikhtilaf*, *adab-adab mesyurat*), although, as it has been illustrated, occasional transgressions do occur.

The belief in the religious duty of implementing a ‘complete’ Islamic normative legal order is, and apparently continues to be, an ideological core conviction within the entire PAS community. However, since the General Elections of 2004, political changes and coalition agreements have led the party to officially decide to exercise patience and relative public silence on this issue. These changes, as all empirical findings suggest, cannot be read as an ‘ideological change’ in the sense that the convictions as such were abandoned. For the Youth Wing’s leaders such behavior is only justifiable as a strategy to realize a temporarily less openly advocated but in party-internal discourse always present normative agenda—the ‘full implementation of Syariah law in all aspects of governance and state organization’ (see, for example, Tantawi 2013a, 2013b). The Pakatan Rakyat coalition is considered as ‘a vehicle to help PAS increase its influence’ (Wikileaks 2009) and a means to step by step educate the country and political partners about ‘God’s Law’, until they will eventually understand that ‘Islam is just for all’ (*Islam adil untuk semua*<sup>6</sup>). ‘Justice’, in this discursive context, should not be confused with secular conceptualizations of the term: it does not imply unconditional equality before the law for all citizens (male/female, Muslim/non-Muslim), and necessarily requires Islamic Supremacy (*Ketuanan Islam*). Justice, in essence, means the full implementation of divine legislation, as defined by the authoritative PAS *ulama*.

It is indeed correct to argue that the ‘moderate’ faction within the senior party has successfully pushed forward a softer public rhetoric since 2004, even though it would be a mistake to believe that PAS reformists had abandoned the goal of *hudud* because *hudud* was not mentioned in the recent PAS election campaign documents. An increasing number of young PAS activists have accepted the strategy and thus no longer mention these ‘obligatory’ goals *too loudly*, precisely to ensure that they have an improved chance of realizing them. This position, in fact, has openly been argued for by the PAS Youth chief (cf. Tantawi 2011c). While the course of the main party is currently

contested up to a point that the reformists' positions are sometimes considered 'deviationist' (*sesat*) by the hardliners, the PAS Youth leadership's position is quite unambiguous. Among this generation of future leaders, post-Islamist moderation is not even progressing slowly. On legalist core convictions of Islamist state organization, the rights of sexual minorities, or a Manichean thinking that separates the world into clear-cut spheres of good and evil, this phenomenon does not take place at all. Conversely, aspirations for re-dogmatizing PAS vis-à-vis such matters are observable, even though the PAS Youth is exposed to the same factors that have contributed to the moderation that the reformist senior PAS faction has achieved. By taking the Youth Wing's discursive realities seriously, combined with observing different levels of discourse (both public and non-public), it becomes obvious that at present, a narrow analytical focus on post-Islamist moderation runs the risk of overemphasizing the 'moderate' PAS faction, even though it is undoubtedly influential and has pioneered significant changes. There is no unilinear evolutionary automatism toward a particular form of change in Islamist beliefs and practices; besides a possible path of moderation in the course of institutional inclusion and ageing, it is also possible that once the current PAS Youth elites become senior PAS politicians, they will work hard to give their present convictions urgent political priority for the PAS as a whole.

Altogether, with regard to the idea that participation in democratic institutions would necessarily have 'moderating' or even secularizing effects on Islamist political movements, five aspects should be taken into consideration for a case-specific modification in the context of this book: First, it must be stressed that de facto contestations on the discursive micro-level can be much more ambiguous, complex and contingent than the static one-directional framework of a 'post-Islamist turn' would suggest. Although, it is to some extent useful as when analytically approaching contemporary Muslim politics in particular contexts such as Iran and Turkey, the hypothesis' unilinear evolutionist scope, its bias of sympathy for post-Islamism, and its over-emphasis on moderating incentives is too narrow to grasp the multidimensional processes and realities at stake.

Second, the results of exposure to other worldviews are contingent. The experience of an ideologically highly contrastive political coalition may not always foster moderation and pluralist compromise, but it might also provoke revivalist mobilization of neo-Islamist sentiments. In fact, the tendency of pragmatic moderation within Pakatan Rakyat has, besides other factors, contributed to the mobilization of a counter-stream of renewed emphasis on Islamist purity among the PAS Youth. Although this largely takes place in a 'well-mannered' behind-the-scenes form, it became publicly officialized in the PAS Youth chief's programmatic slogan 'purify the struggle, bring about victory!', and is constantly present in the reactionary speeches and publications of the PAS Youth leadership under Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi and Nik Mohamad Abduh.

Third, the generational dimension: Young political activists often, though not necessarily, have a tendency to be ideologically more radical or 'hot-blooded'

(*berdarah panas*) than more experienced or ‘moderate’ older generations. This factor can potentially serve as one counter-force that works against issue-specific initiatives for moderation that certain party elders try to push forward. In other instances, the transgressive tendency of youth may also ‘radically’ work toward issue-specific moderation, for example, the PAS Youth’s stance on local rock music. Nevertheless if the senior party already walks the path of moderation, the young generation, or some of its sub-groupings, may counter-hegemonially identify themselves in opposition to it. This was the case in PAS in the late 1970s and early 1980s, when despite all institutional ‘incentives’, the PAS Young Turks refused the inclusion in a government coalition, and it is presently taking place to a much less confrontational, but still remarkable, extent.

Fourth, one should not overlook the aspect of orthodox education about the divinely obligatory nature of struggling for classical Islamist state organization and fighting the allegedly omnipresent ‘enemies of Islam’, both of which are included in the education of all party cadres, in *usrah* and other institutionalized channels. This continues to be an integral part of organizational culture within PAS, and is especially influential during the process of youth caderization. Such indoctrination takes place through the internal *tarbiyah* system, which all young cadres regularly follow and where Islamist core convictions and ideological (or ‘God-made’) boundaries are internalized through respective lectures and reading materials.

Finally, the scientific logic of incentives and worldly political interests, which are conceptualized as imperatives for strategic and subsequent ideological moderation toward post-Islamism, may not pay sufficient attention to non-worldly interests that are often of enormous emic importance. Among the PAS Youth, it is a widespread and frequently repeated conviction that it is much more important to safeguard the ‘core values’ of the ‘basis of the Islamic struggle’ (*asas perjuangan Islam*) and seek Allah’s pleasure, than to compromise for the sake of electoral gains (compare Tantawi 2013a, 2013b). This superior interest in fulfilling the obligation to ‘please God’ and follow His will, according to which Muslims must work toward the full implementation of God’s legal system, is interrelated with a personal, in the actors’ imagination very ‘real’, non-worldly interest in collecting *pahala* (reward points) for Judgment Day (*hari akhirat*) and the Afterlife (*akhirat/ukhrawi*). Such aspects of piety and deep religious beliefs, which are constitutive elements of the political and existential thinking of many Islamist activists in PAS and elsewhere, tend to be all too easily downplayed by scholars who exclusively focus on worldly institutional incentives for post-Islamist moderation. The popular idea that ‘religion will not dictate what politics should be, but will itself be reduced to politics’ (Roy 2012: 17), or put differently, ‘politics’ has form but lacks content, whereas ‘religion’ is *necessarily* subordinate and distinguished by its content only, is not entirely convincing. In fact, the relationship between politics and religion is not a one-way street: The forms of politics can restrict the maneuvering room of religion, but religious doctrine can similarly

restrict politics. Furthermore, proponents of the hypothesis of post-Islamism tend to selectively emphasize the discourses of liberal Islamist intellectuals, or understand Islamist political parties only through the lens of how the non-religious political economy works. From the actors' point of view, PAS is *not only a political party*, but also represents a universalist religious movement ('*PAS adalah gerakan Islam, bukan hanya parti politik*') that is first and foremost responsible to God's 'commandments', and every single PAS member who underwent the party's *tarbiyah* is familiar with this constantly emphasized principle. Though PAS is nevertheless, of course, a political party and as such, some of its political behavior is predictable, a secular cost-benefit analysis of worldly political interests may fall short of adequately taking into account the 'extra' of decidedly anti-secular religious politics.

Schiffauer's (2010: 359, author's translation) claim that post-Islamism has already taken root 'in wide parts of the Muslim world' as a result of alleged general 'disillusionment' with the 'state-political orientation' of 'classical Islamism' since the 1990s, does therefore not apply to the PAS Youth community. PAS Youth elites continue to consensually believe in the values of classical state-oriented political Islamism, and even do so with renewed passion. Unlike the young urban intellectuals of Milli Görüs or Iranian reformists, the current discourse-dominating forces in the PAS Youth remain deeply obsessed with political 'core goals' for Islamic state organization, but *at the same time* the spectrum has been widened to utilize modern Islamic popular culture and religious marketization. More generally, Islamism in Malaysia has not only become more mainstream, but the Muslim mainstream has also become more Islamist, as popular cultural and political Islamism mutually reinforce each other. Islamism can thereby be both, an individual project on a cultural level, and at the same time substantially political in nature. In sum, according to the empirical data and the author's interpretative view, there is no post-Islamist evolution in the contemporary PAS Youth, neither for reasons of democratic institutional inclusion nor because of the 'cultural turn' in the 'second wave of Islamism'. The PAS Youth has appropriated the rise of modern Islamic marketization and popular culture into a 'classical Islamist' normative agenda remarkably well, albeit with a 'pop-Islamist twist'. The post-2009 PAS Youth under Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi, Azman Shapawi, Nik Mohamad Abduh, Riduan Mohamad Nor, Kamaruzaman Mohamad, Syed Abdul Kadir Al-Joofre and other discourse-dominant figures that have been mentioned can rightly be described as a neo-conservative group that in its historical appearance runs counter to the academic narrative of a post-Islamist evolution.

As for the question what impact the PAS Youth has on the wider political landscape in Malaysia, it can be concluded that with its decidedly Islamist dogmatism, the potential for cooperation with PAS's secularist coalition partner DAP and the liberal factions of PKR is rather limited. Many PAS Youth activists still perceive the DAP as receivers of top-down *dakwah* communication, rather than as partners on eye-level. The DAP, for its part, received more parliamentary seats than PAS in the last three general elections

(2004, 2008 and 2013), and is certainly not enthusiastic about becoming reduced to a 'protected infidel minority' (*kafir dhimmi*) with a lower legal status. For the time being, the PAS Youth's neo-Islamist positions have little impact on PAS' official course, which shows a greater degree of flexibility and sympathy for compromise-based politics. But nevertheless, the PAS Youth's repeated clashes with DAP and PKR have not been overly helpful for strengthening the PR coalition's spirit, and may, if they continue, further weaken its cohesiveness and appeal in the future. At this point it is anything but clear which of the competing factions within PAS—hardliners or pragmatists—will become the authoritative force, once the party would become part of a PR government. It remains to be seen to what extent PAS' young 'helpers of Allah' (*ansoorullah*) may, at a later stage, become more influential in the party, and to which direction their political positions might develop in the course of aging and time. In any case, generationality in general and the Youth Wing in particular must be taken into consideration by anyone seeking to understand the contested dynamics that constitute the Islamic Party of Malaysia and its politics in the past, present and future.

In Malaysia, secularity as a positive ideal no longer plays a noteworthy role in the Malay majority's political discourses. The question pertaining to *which* form of Islamist ideology becomes discourse dominating, and how precisely it should shape political and legislative decisions, though, remains heavily contested between different Muslim actors and organizations, with different normative ideas and power-political interests. To an increasing extent, this contestation is no longer limited to political battles between PAS and UMNO, but has been further diversified and complicated by a large number of vocal Islamist civil society actors—Islamic non-governmental organizations, Islamic student organizations, right-wing ethno-nationalist groups and individual activists. To some extent, these multiple voices challenge the discursive monopoly of PAS in the local Islamist realm. Additionally, a number of PAS Youth members have even left the party in order to join other Islamist groups, for example, the supposedly more 'uncompromising' transnationalist Hizbut Tahrir Malaysia (HTM). To better understand PAS, the PAS Youth, and the dynamics of Islamism in contemporary Malaysia, an in-depth observation of these alternative actors should be undertaken as well, also in terms of their relationship with PAS, UMNO and among each other. Similarly, Muslim youth who exist beyond the Islamist or ethno-nationalist spectrum should not be forgotten—for instance, those young 'rebels' who belong to counter-culture groups like the Malay-dominated notorious *Mat Rempit* scene, those that the PAS Youth currently tries to 'approach' as *dakwah* targets. Finally, the effects of the massive Islamization on the increasingly '*haramized*' (Peletz 2011: 137) non-Muslim population in Malaysia should be studied as well. Few academic works exist on these topics, let alone from an anthropological point of view.

In the wider Islamic world, according to several analysts that have been mentioned in this book, certain post-Islamist developments may indeed be

taking place, and the fact that Malaysia and the PAS Youth are presently not an exemplary case, does not necessarily place the supposed phenomenon's significance into question. While Muslim politics in Malaysia may be atypical if compared to current post-Islamist tendencies elsewhere, Malaysia is nevertheless a pioneering force when it comes to the modern marketization and 'popization' of Islam. In this respect, Malaysia is largely comparable to (though not equitable with) many other places where the 'second wave of Islamism' has taken root. If viewed from a broader comparative perspective, questions about what direction Islamism will develop in may be too simplistic. Instead, it is advisable to carefully examine the multiple manifestations of Islamism—as a political ideology, life philosophy and as a socio-cultural phenomenon—in their locally specific contexts, and also to take into account their relative heterogeneity. Rather than uncritically applying the fashionable concept of a 'post-Islamist evolution', it may be analytically more beneficial to reconsider its validity with the method of empirical falsification and to *problematize* such one-directional grand narratives vis-à-vis the contingent, multi-dimensional realities that they seek to explain.

## Notes

- 1 Original: *hancur Yahudi*/*hancur Yahudi laknatullah*, a common phrase at PAS Youth demonstrations and contextually related speeches (see, e.g. PAS Youth Homepage 2010b). See also Ustaz Tantawi's (2010b: no page) reference to Jews as the 'traditional enemies of Islam' (*musuh tradisi ummat Islam*).
- 2 The PAS Youth chief Tantawi (2010b: no page) lists numerous 'enemies' who in his view pursue 'evil plans' (*rancangan jahat*) in order to 'destroy Islam' (*menghancurkan Islam*).
- 3 Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi quoted in *Malaysiakini*, 19 September 2011.
- 4 For such argumentations held by the current PAS Youth chief, see, e.g. Tantawi (2010b).
- 5 For respective publications of PAS Youth leaders, see, for example, Abduh (2008c); Fadhil and Nor (2009); Tantawi (2011d, 2011e).
- 6 Presently a popular PAS slogan.

# Glossary

- adab al-Ikhtilaf* Islamic ethics of disagreement  
*Ahli Jawatankuasa Kerja (AJK)* Member of the Executive Central Committee  
*ajaran sesat* deviant teachings  
*Akademi Kepimpinan Pemuda PAS* PAS Youth Leadership Academy  
*akhirat* Afterlife  
*Allah* God  
*al-mukminin* lit.: ‘pure’ people, a term used by pious Muslims for self-description  
*Amanat Haji Hadi* Edict of Haji Hadi (*Haji Hadi* = PAS President Dato’ Seri Haji Abdul Hadi Awang)  
*ansoorullah* lit.: ‘helpers of Allah’, a term used by some PAS members for self-description  
*aqidah/akidah* Muslim faith  
*‘asabiyyah* communitarianism/tribalism/ethno-centrism  
*asas* foundation/basis/core principle(s)  
*asas perjuangan Islam* foundation/basis/core principles of the Islamic struggle  
*Bahasa Melayu* Malay language  
*Barisan Nasional (BN)* National Front  
*ba’yat/bai’yat* oath of compliance (verb form also spelled: *berbaiah*)  
*Baytul Muslimin* Islamic matchmaking body of pro-PAS students on campus (lit.: ‘house of Muslims’)  
*bendahari* treasurer (a position in PAS)  
*bid’ah* illegitimate religious innovation  
*bumiputera/bumiputra* sons of the soil  
*cawangan* sub-district (below *kawasan*), the lowest layer in PAS’ organizational hierarchy  
*ceramah* political talk/meeting/dialog session  
*dakwah* missionary work (toward Muslims and/or non-Muslims)  
*Dasar Ekonomi Baru (DEB)* New Economic Policy (NEP)  
*dewan* organizational wing  
*Dewan Himpunan Penyokong PAS* PAS Non-Muslim Supporters’ Wing  
*Dewan Pemuda PAS* PAS Youth Wing  
*Dewan Muslimat PAS* PAS Women’s Wing



*Dewan Ulama(k) PAS* PAS Ulama Wing

*Daulah Islami(y)yah* Islamic Rule/Islamic State

*dhimmi/kafir dhimmi* protected minority under Islamic Law

*Erbakan(s)* a controversial term used to describe a ‘hardline’ faction within PAS (mostly not used by PAS members themselves), referring to the first Islamist prime minister of Turkey, Necmettin Erbakan (1926–2011)

*Erdogan(s)* a controversial term used to describe a ‘pragmatist’ faction within PAS (mostly not used by PAS members themselves), referring to the Turkish prime minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan

*fatwa* legal opinion concerning Islamic Law (usually issued by an Islamic scholar)

*hajj/haj* pilgrimage to Mecca

*halal* permissible according to Islamic Law

*harakah Islami(y)ah* Islamic movement (a term used by PAS members to describe themselves)

*Harakah* PAS’ newspaper

*Harakah Daily* online version of PAS’ newspaper *Harakah*

*haram* forbidden according to Islamic Law

*Hezbollah* Shi’ite Islamic political organization and militia in Lebanon

*Hizbul Muslimin* predecessor party of PAS (also called Parti Orang Muslimin Malaya); the first decidedly Islamist political organization in Malaya

*hudud* a part of Islamic Criminal Law (lit.: limits), referring to certain ‘fixed’ punishments and definitions of crimes

*ibadah* worship

*Ikhwanul Muslimin* Muslim Brotherhood

*Islam Hadhari* civilizational/progressive Islam

*jabatan* bureau/office/department

*Jabatan Amal/Unit Amal* a PAS security and welfare organization led by the PAS Youth

*jahiliy(y)ah* the time before the revelation of Islam (age of ‘darkness’/‘ignorance’)

*jahiliy(y)ah moden* ‘modern *jahiliyah*’, deviations from Islamic teachings in modern times

*jamaah/jemaah* Muslim community (also: *jama’at*, *jama’ah*)

*Jawatankuasa Disiplin/Jawatankuasa Tata tertib* PAS Disciplinary Committee

*Jawatankuasa Kerja* Executive Central Committee

*jihad* obligation for believers to struggle to carry out Allah’s commandments/will (type 1: non-violent struggle; type 2: violent struggle for ‘defense’)

*kafir* infidel(s) (note: the Malay plural form *kafir* differs from the Arabic one)

*kafir-mengafir* mutual accusations to be an infidel (e.g. between PAS and UMNO)

*Kaum Muda* Young Group (Islamic reform movement)

*Kaum Tua* Old Group

*kawasan* district (below the *negeri* and above the *cawangan* layer in PAS’ organizational hierarchy)

- Kelab Penyokong PAS* PAS Non-Muslim Supporters' Club (since 2010 replaced by Dewan Himpunan Penyokong PAS/DHPP)
- Kepimpinan Ulama* Ulama Leadership (within PAS)
- Kerajaan Perpaduan* Unity Government
- ketua* chief
- ketua pemuda* youth chief
- ketua penerangan* information chief
- Ketuanan Islam* Islamic Supremacy
- Ketuanan Melayu* Malay Supremacy
- Khilafah Islamiy(y)ah/Khilafah Islam* Islamic Caliphate
- kopiah*: a white Muslim skullcap, worn by many PAS members
- lajnah/lujnah* bureau/office/department (a body within PAS)
- madrasah* Islamic school, Islamic seminary
- Majlis Syura Ulama(k)* Syura Council (the most powerful body within PAS)
- masjid* mosque
- Mat Rempit* sub-culture popular among Malays (related to motor-bikes, certain styles of dress, speech, behavior)
- Melayu* Malay
- menteri besar* chief minister
- mufti* Islamic jurist/chief consultant
- mujahid* (plural: *muhadinin*) 'fighter for Islam', can, but does not necessarily, refer to militant struggles
- Muktamar Tahunan* Annual General Assembly
- munafiq/munafik* (plural: *munafiqin/munafikin*) hypocrite (from an Islamic point of view)
- mursyidul 'am* spiritual leader
- Muslimat Muda* a youth group within the PAS Women's Wing
- musuh Islam* enemy/enemies of Islam
- naib ketua* 2nd deputy chief (the third-highest ranking position in PAS Youth's hierarchy, below *timbangan*; unlike *timbangan*, there can be more than one *naib*, the number varies depending on the respective organizational layer)
- Nasyid* Islamic music genre
- NISA'* a youth organization within the PAS Women's Wing responsible for *dakwah*
- Negara Berkebajikan/Negara Kebajikan* Welfare State
- Negara Islam* Islamic State
- negeri* state (within Malaysia)
- pahala* reward(s) (from God), merit
- Pakatan Rakyat* People's Alliance
- Parti Orang Muslimin Malaya* predecessor party of PAS (also called Hizbul Muslimin)
- Pejabat Agong PAS* PAS Headquarters (currently located at Jalan Raja Laut, Kuala Lumpur)
- perjuangan Islam* Islamic struggle

*Perlembagaan PAS* PAS Constitution

*Persatuan Islam Sa-Malaya* Pan-Malayan Islamic Association (Pan-Malayan Islamic Association), an earlier name of PAS

*Persatuan Ulama-Ulama Sa-Malaya* Pan-Malayan Union of Islamic Scholars, a historical UMNO *ulama* organization

*pondok* traditional Islamic boarding school (mostly in Malay villages)

*presiden PAS* president of PAS

*properubahan/pro-perubahan* 'pro change' (faction within PAS, an emic term)

*pusat* national level (the highest organizational layer in PAS' hierarchy), lit.: 'center/central'

*qisas* a part of Islamic Criminal Law, lit.: retaliation

*rakyat* the people

*Rukun Negara* lit. 'Pillars of the Nation', official state philosophy in Malaysia

*setiausaha* secretary general

*Sunnah* traditions following the example of Prophet Muhammad and his 'right-guided' companions

*syahadah* Islamic confession of faith

*syahid* martyr

*Syariah/Syariat Islam* lit. 'the path'; source/basis of Islamic Law (often used as a synonym for Islamic Law)

*syura/mesyurat* Islamic consultation/deliberation

*tahaluf siyasi* a political coalition permissible under Islamic Law (in the terminology of PAS and the Muslim Brotherhood)

*tafsir* exegesis of the Qur'an

*takfir* Muslims accusing other Muslims of being unbelievers, infidels or hypocrites

*tarbiyah* Islamic education, study circles, instruction, bringing up

*timbangan ketualtimbangan preisden* deputy chief/deputy president (second-highest ranking person in the PAS hierarchy, below *presiden/ketua*, above *naib*)

*Tok Guru* Islamic teacher, usually from a traditional Malay Islamic boarding school (*pondok*), in PAS discourse also referring to highly respected *ulama* leaders

*Ucapan Tema/Ucaptama* Keynote Speech (at a PAS General Assembly)

*ulamahulamak* Islamic scholar

*ummah/lumat Islam* the Muslim community

*usrah* study circle(s), group meeting within PAS

*ustaz* title to address *ulama*

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